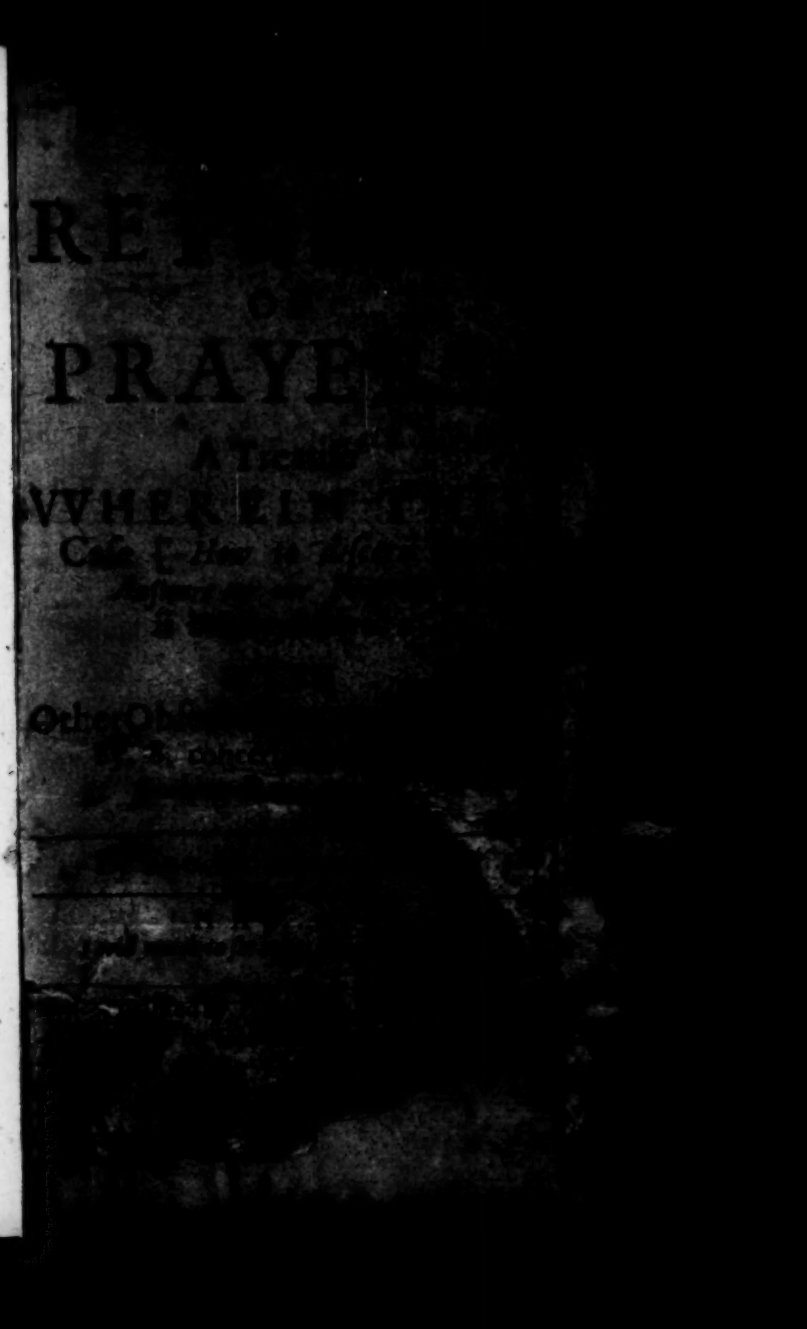

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Zealously Practice what
is good and then Great
will be thy reward in
Glis Amen

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TO
THE MUCH
HONOURED
KNIGHT,
Sir
NATHANAEL RICH.

SIR,

GOd, who from all eternity hath had an infinite Mass of grace and glory lying by him, to bestow upon his Church: and did accordinly provide a treasury and Magazin sufficient

cient wherein to store up all, [the Bosome of his son] *in whom are* hid, riches *so* unsearchable, *as cannot be told over, much lesse spent to all eternity.*

Ephes. 3. 8.

πλουσίως Tit. 3. 6. *He hath as richly shed his holy Spirit on us: that* we, who *could never have* known *of any thing bequeathed us, nor* what to pray for as we ought, *might both fully from him* know all that God hath given us, *and through him lay claim thereto,* who maketh intercession for us; *and so doth furnish us with a privy key to all that Treasury, which otherwise, is fast shut up to all the world.*

Through which Spirit of Prayer, *and* Supplications

ons *thus* poured forth, *beleevers come to be at once* anointed to the fellowship, *and execution of those three glorious Offices of* Christ *their Head. Not only* ' *of* Priests; *by* offering up *their prayers*, as spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ: *but* ' *of* Kings; to rule with God. *Hos.* 11, 12. *Being hereby made of Privy Counsell to the King of Kings, so as* their Counsels, *and desires expresst in* their petitions, *are said to* be fulfilled; *and* their decrees *in their* Prayers made, *ratified, and* established. *Nay further, by vertue of this priviledge, advanced to such height of fa-*

Ps. 20. 4, 5.

Iob 22. 27, 28.

vour, as by their strength *in prayer alone*, to have power with God *himself, and not onely with him, but also* over him, *and* in their wrestlings to prevail, *Yea to command: Himself hath said it*; Thus saith the Lord, the holy One of Israel and his Maker, ASK of me, of things to come, concerning my sonnes, and concerning the work of my hands, COMMAND YE ME, *Isai.* 45.11. *which so transcendent priviledge of power, is likewise by the expresse words of this great Charter, universally extended unto al transactions of this lower part of his dominions*; *whether Ecclesiasticall, which*

do

do concerne his ſonnes, *that is, his Church: or whatever other, the more ordinary* works of his hands, *that appertain to common providence.*

And for as much as theſe grand affairs of this his Kingdome, *as future, and* to come, *are commended to their prayers, as their moſt proper ſubjects, about which they are to treat,* Ask of me of things to come: Matth. 6.10. *In this reſpect, they do become as truely* Prophets *alſo; though not in ſo full and compleat, yet in ſome kinde of true reſemblance; not by* foretelling, *yet by* foreſpeaking *in their prayers, things that come to paſſe. To demonſtrate which, God,*

who made and upholds this world, and all things in it, by the word of his power, doth likewise rule and govern it, by the Presidents, and prescript rules, of the word of his will: exactly
Psal. 25. 10 dispensing unto men, both rewards and punishments, according to the tenour of some or other of his promises and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded; though with such various liberty, in respect of the particulars, that his wayes remain unsearchable and past finding out: That look how he appointed in the heavens, those ordinances of the Sunne, Moon, and Starres, by their light, heate, and motion, to rule

the

the day and night, *to divide and cause the severall* seasons *of the year, and all the changes and alterations that do passe over this* animall *and* naturall *world. In like manner hath he stretched out that so* exceeding broad expāse *of his word and law, (to which the Psalmist doth assimilate it) over this* rational *world, of Angels and Men; and therein set his* Statutes, *and his* Judgements, *that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and punishments, they might order and direct these his creatures reasonable, and all their actions; also dispose, and set out all the issues of them. And seeing his* Saints *they*

Ps. 19. 1 96.

Ps. 19. 1 2 3 4. compared with Rom. 10 18.

they are a people whose hearts is his Law; *and their* delight *is to* meditate therein both day & night, *they dayly calculating and* observing *the various aspects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of those innumerable precepts, promises and threatnings, which themselves and others, Nations or men, stand under: and by a* Judgement *thence resulting; so farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their supplications and petitions* according to Gods will: *Hence their prayers oft, full happily succeed, and aforehand do accord, to those issues and events, that afterwards fall out. That like as it some-*

Ier. 8. 7.

times

times falls out, that the earth comes to be just under the Sunne and Moone, in some of their conjunctions; so their desires and prayers, sometimes in a direct line, fall under, and subordinately concurre with Gods secret purposes, and some revealed promise met in conjunction, to produce such and such effects. The Spirit *also, herein* helping their infirmities, *sometimes so guiding and directing them, by a gracious preinstinct, though unbeknown to them, to pitch their requests upon such particulars, as God hath fully purposed to bring to passe; becoming thereby, as it were, the Spirit of propheey unto them; respectively, in some*

same measure and degree.

Thus doth that great King employ his neerest servants, as his under-Officers, and Sheriffs to serve his Writs, and executions upon his enimies; to execute the Judgement written in his threatnings, Psal. 149. 9. and to accomplish his mercies written also, by putting all the promises in suit, to be as man-midwives (as Hezekiahs allusion, when he sent a visiting to the Prophet Esay, for his voyce and suffrage, seemeth to import) to help and assist his promises and decrees in their travel with mercies and deliverance, when these their children do come unto the birth, and there is no

Esay 37. 2, 3. 4. Zeph. 2. 2.

strength

ſtrength to bring them forth.

In all which, they ſhall therefore have the honour to be accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greateſt works of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and laſt Edition, both of all Gods works, and likewiſe ours, then compleat and finiſhed, ſhall be publiſhed to all the world, they ſhall finde their names put to them, together with his own; and the ſame by him acknowledged, to be as truely the works of their hearts and prayers, as that they are the ſole work of his hands and power. Such honour have all his Saints.

And if all the works of God

God are so exceeding great, and his thoughts therein so very deep, Psal. 92. 5. that every Iota of them, doth deserve our deepest studies, and intentions; and thereunto require a proper skill and wisedome, to reade his hand peculiar unto the Saints, vers. 6. whereunto there must be adjoyned the most diligent search, and attentive observation to finde out his meaning in them; and withall a speciall inclination, and delight to be conversant therein, Thy works are very great, sought out of those that have pleasure in them, Psal. 111. 2. And if, of all the rest, those choicer pieces, his works of mercy may chal-

Psal. 77. 6.

challenge our beſt regard: in which his heart and delights are moſt *on which his Wiſedome hath laid on the richeſt workmanſhip, in the moſt curious contrivements of his love: Then ſurely that ſelected volume of more ſpecial mercies* [His Epiſtles] *vouchſafed in anſwer to our prayers, is above all other, moſt exactly to be ſtudied, and moſt diligently to be peruſed by us. Wherein* God *doth unboſome himſelf, and lay open his heart, more ſweetly, more familiarly unto us; which are directed, and in a maner dedicated more particularly unto our ſelves alone; Many of them written with his own hand, in a more immediate*

Mic. 7. 18.

diate manner diſcouered and appearing in them: and all of them come ſealed with the impreſſe of everlaſting love, and down laden with the encloſure of the moſt precious tokens of his ſpeciall favour. Who ſo is wiſe, will obſerve theſe things; and they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſſe of the Lord.

Pſal. 107.34

Neither have ſuch favours, onely more of mercy in the things themſelves beſtowed, but are further endeared to us, by being made our own mercies, *by a more peculiar title to them: by which the kindeneſſe in them is rendred double. For therein we have that royall liberty to become our own*

chooſers,

choosers, and contrivers of our own condition; having all the promises thrown down to us, with blanks for us to write our names in which of them we please; which is the greatest liberty. And We have withall his Spirit *secretly directing, and fixing the needle of our desires, to the same point, wherein his great intentions towards us do meet with our best good: which is indeed the truest liberty. And to be made our selves, whom we love so well, and therefore delight to do good unto, the chiefest instruments under him of our own greatest happinesse, is a priviledge, then which, the creature is not made capable of a more transcen-*

transcendent royalty. And yet when the greatest love, thus rectified, which possibly we can bear our selves, hath opened its mouth widest, *and stretched our desires in praying, to their utmost compasse, then will* Gods *infinite vast love, not onely* fil *them but* do for us above all that we are able to ask, *yea* to think, exceeding abundantly above all: *as* far *above, as* his thoughts are above our thoughts, *which is* far *more* than the heavens are higher than the earth.

All which, when put together (if well considered,) how would it provoke us to call in all the precious stock of our time, thoughts, and intentions

intentions which we cast away on trifles, to lay out the choisest portion of them in this thriving trade of entercourse with God; the returns whereof are better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof, than fine gold. *It is the praying Christian that alone employes the riches of the promises, which we usually let lie by us like dead stock unimproved: whilest he, like a* Wise *and diligent* Merchant, *looks abroad upon all the affairs of Iesus Christ, that are afloat here in this world, and adventures in them all; is watchfull to spie out all advantages, and with an holy* πραγμοσύνη, intermedleth in e-

every busineſſe *that may bring in glory unto God, good unto the Church, grace and comfort to his own ſoul. And how infinitely rich muſt that man needs become, that puts even Gods riches out to uſe, with the* increaſe *of* ten Talents for one, *yea* an hundred fold!

The due eſtimate whereof, would no leſſe quicken us to as diligent an enquiry, what becomes of all thoſe goodly adventures, the prayers we make; to liſten what haven they arrive at, how, and when, and with what fraught they do return.

In which great duty, and moſt neceſſary property of all true Merchants, yet many of the beſt and greateſt deal-

ers,

ers, that are diligent enough in praying, are ſtill found failing and deficient; that omit no gainfull opportunity of adventure, but are careleſſe and unobſervant of their returns.

Some *through ignorance (it may be) that this is at all a duty, or of any ſuch importance, are carefull onely how to lade in praiers enough not expecting to finde any* of this bread caſt upon the waters, *until that great and generall* return *of themſelves and all the world,* with joy bringing their ſheaves with them. Others, *though at preſent, many of their prayers come home* after a few daies, *& richly laden; yet through*

want

want of skill to reade those Bills of Exchange which God often writes in an obscurer Character, they lie unregarded by them. Many when voyages prove long, (though to their greater advantage, when once they do return, yet in the mean time) through discouragement, they give all for lost, as we do ships at Sea we cannot hear of. The most are commonly complaining, that their adventures still miscarry, and that little or nothing comes of all their prayers. And All are negligent of keeping their Books of Accounts, to cast up their comings in, and goings out, the one with the other. By which they lose the chiefest portion

of

of that comfort, which for the present, God hath here allotted us to live upon [the revenues of their prayers.] And God also, is not onely robbed of that Custome of his glory which should thence accrew; but wronged also by standing still as debtor in their accounts to many prayers in the return of which he hath been creditor long agoe.

I have endeavoured therefore in this small Treatise to convince beleevers of the grand importance of this duty, which is so full of gaine: to discover likewise the causes of the neglect herein, and remove the temptations and discouragements which doe occasion it; and have briefly resolved such cases as doe more usually occur in the practise of it. But principaly, my desire was to give

in ſome few experiments, and obſervations, which may helpe to teach the weaker ſort, though not perfectly to reade, yet here and there to ſpell,) and eſpecially out of the impreſſions in their own hearts) Gods meaning towards them in his anſweres. I have caſt in ſome ſcattered calculations of broken prayers caſt up, which though thy will not amount to make generall and perfect Tables out of, yet may ſerve, as Inſtances and examples, for young beginners, to direct them in the exerciſe of this moſt uſefull skill, and wiſdome, how to compute and ballance their accounts by comparing their prayers *and their* returnes *together.*

This ſmall and imperfect embryon, I have preſumed to ſend forth into the world; and direct-

ed

ed it first of all to present its service unto you; and make an honorable and thankfull mention of your Name. Your worth deserves a more costly, large, and lasting monument for this inscription. Your own abilities of learning, eloquence, and depth of wisdome in humane affaires, would you be perswaded to lay them out, as you are able, would erect such a remembrance and sumptuous memoriall of you, when you are gathered to your Fathers, as would beare some proportion to your great worth. But that which emboldned mee was the neere affinity which meditations of this nature doe hold, with those other your more retired thoughts you thinke to none but God and your owne soule. You have beene long a

frequent and constant dealer in this blessed way of entercourse with God in private: Those that know you, know your strict observance of those exchange hours you have devoted to meet with God, and enjoy communion with Him. But above all, it was that personall obligation, under which a great and speciall favour from you long since brought me, upon which I devoted (with my selfe) the first of my labours unto your service. And it became one great reliefe unto my thoughts, weighing the many inconveniences of appearing thus in publique, that it gave so full occasion to pay my vowes thus openly before all the world; which having now done, God that is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, fill you with

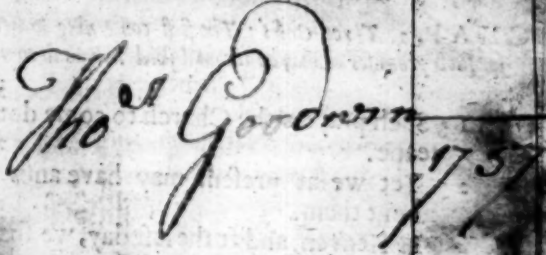
with all Grace, and grant all your petitions; ſo prayes

Your Worſhips

obliged to love

and ſerve you,

THO: GOODVVIN.



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FINIS. THE

THE RETURNE OF PRAYERS.

PSAL. 85. 8.

I will heare what God the Lord will speake: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to his Saints: but let them not turne againe to folly.

The Coherence of the words.

THis PSALME was penned, in the name and for the comfort of the whole

Church of the Iews, both as a Prophecy of, and a Prayer for their returne out of the Babyloniſh Captivity, and the flowing in againe of that ancient glory, peace, adminiſtration of Juſtice, liberty of Gods Ordinances, plenty and increaſe, which formerly they enjoyed, but had now ſuffered an ebbe of ſeventy yeeres continuance. And firſt he beginneth with Prayer, from the firſt *Verſe* to this we have in hand, putting the Lord in minde of, and urging Him with His gracious dealings in former times unto His Church: this is not the firſt time (ſaith he) that the Church hath

hath beene in Captivity, and that thou haſt returned it; (as out of *Egypt*, &c.) and therefore wee hope that thou wilt doe ſo againe; *Thou haſt beene favourable unto thy Land*, &c. His prayer being finiſhed and hee having ſpoke, hee now ſtands, and liſtens, as you uſe to doe when you expect an Eccho, what Eccho hee ſhould have, what anſwere would bee returned from Heaven, whither his prayer had already come, *I will heare what the Lord will ſpeake:* or as ſome reade it, *I heare what the Lord doth ſpeake:* for ſometimes there is a preſent Eccho, a ſpeedy anſwere returned to a

Cap. 1.

mans heart, even ere the prayer is halfe finiſhed, as unto *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9, 20, 21. And in briefe it is this, *The Lord will ſpeake peace unto His people*: this anſwere he findes written at the bottome of the petition, but with this clauſe of admonition for time to come, added, *But let them not returne againe to folly*: a good uſe to be made of ſo gracious an anſwere.

CHAP.

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Chap. I.

The maine observation and subject of this Discourse thence deduced: That Gods people are diligently to observe the answeres to their Prayers: *The reasons of it.*

THese words being especially spoken in relation to the answere of God returned to his prayer made, therefore in that relation I meane principally to handle them.

The observation is this; *That when a man hath put up prayers to God,* hee is to rest *assured, that God will in mercy answere his Prayers,*

Chap. 1.

and *to liſten diligently*, *and obſerve how his prayers are anſwered*: both are here to bee obſerved. *I will heare what God will ſpeake*, that is, how He will accompliſh them; and withall hee confidently expreſſeth an aſſurance, that *God will ſpeake peace*. Thus doth the Church *Mich.* 7. 7,8. *I will looke to the Lord, I will waite, my God will heare mee*: Shee was both ſure of gracious audience with Him, *my God will heare mee*: and ſhe will *waite* till hee anſweres her, and obſerve how hee doth it, *I will looke to the Lord*: and verſe 9. *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, till hee plead my cauſe*. So *Habakkuk*,

kuk, hee having made a Prayer against the Tyranny of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in the first Chapter, having ended it, he begins the second Chapter thus, *I will stand upon my watch-tower, and see what he will answer mee:* and in the end an answer comes *verse* 2. and as he thus waited for a Vision (for sometime their Prophecies were in answer to their prayers) so should we for an answer unto ours. Cap. 1.

The sinfulnesse of the neglect hereof demonstrated by seven reasons.

1. Reason, because otherwise you take an Ordinance of God in vain in your hearts, which is to take *Gods Name* (with whom in that Ordinance you deal) *in vaine:* for it

Reas. 1. Hereby an Ordinance of God is taken in vaine: which is Gods Name.

is a signe you think your prayer nor an effectuall means to attain that end it is ordained for; and say secretly in your hearts, as they *Iob.* 21. 15. *What profit have we, if we pray to him?* for if we use any means, and expect not the end, it is a signe we think the means vaine to accomplish that end. Whereas every faithfull prayer is ordained of God to be a meanes to obtaine what we desire and pray for, and is not put up in vain, but shall have answer: 1 *Iohn.* 5. 14, 15. *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we aske any thing according to His will, He heareth us:* tis true, God heareth

reth an enemy, but to *heare with favour*, is the *hearing* there meant; and is so used in our ordinary speech, as wee say of a Favourite, that hee hath the Kings eare; and if a man bee *obstinate* to a mans *counsell*, wee say, *hee would not heare*, though hee give the hearing; so here, *to heare* is a word of gracious inclination to doe the thing required; and thus *Gods eares* are said to bee *open to their prayers*; and so it followes there, that *if hee heareth us, whatsoever we aske, wee know that wee have the petitions that wee desired of Him.* Assoone as wee have prayed, we are said *to have our petitions*, that is, Cap. 1.

Cap. 1.

they are then granted, and we may be confident they are assented unto by God; although in regard of outward dispensation, the command for accomplishment is not yet come forth: even as a petitioner is said to *have his suite*, when the *word of the King is gone forth* that it shall bee done, though it passeth not the Seale, or bee not signed a good while after. And like as when a wicked man sinneth, assoone as the act is committed, so soone *doth sentence* from God goe foorth against the sinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may be) a good while after, according to that of *Solo-*

mon,

mon, Sentence against an evill doer is not presently executed, it is *presently sentenced*, as the words imply, but not *executed*: so in like manner falleth it out, when a godly man prayes, that as soon as the prayer arrives in Heaven (which is in an instant) so soon is the petition granted, (So *Dan. 9. at the beginning* of his prayer the *Command came forth verf. 23.* though the *Angel*, who brought the answer, arrived not at him till towards the end in the Evening, *Verse 21.*) but the reall accomplishment of it may be deferred. So as no prayer in respect of an answer to it is in vaine; but where God

Cap. 8. Eccles. 7. 11.

Cap. 1.

God hath given a heart to ſpeak, He hath an eare to hear, and love to returne anſwer; which not to regard, is to take an Ordinance in vaine, which is *Gods* Name.

Reaſ. 2. We take the Attributes of God in vain.

And ſecondly, not ſimply *Gods Name*, as in an Ordinance made known, but alſo His Name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vain. For it is a ſigne you think of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that he cannot hear: or his hand ſhortned, that he cannot ſave: or his heart ſtraitned, and his bowells reſtrained, that he will not:* And thus you rob him, and deſpoile him of one of his moſt Royall Titles,

Titles, wherby he ſtiles himſelf, a *God that heareth prayers*; who is ſo regardfull of them, that in the firſt of *Kings* 8. 59. they are ſaid to be *nigh the Lord day and night*, they are all before him, and he ſets them in his view, as we do letters of friends which we ſtick in our windows, that we may remember to anſwer them, or lay them not out of our boſomes, that we might be ſure not to forget them: ſo the petitions of his people, paſſe not out of his ſight, till he ſends an *anſwer*, which is called *ſpeaking* here; God *ſpeaking* as well in his *works* as in his *word*. But you, by your

Chap. 1. Pſal. 65. 2.

negle&

Cap. 1.

neglect herein, make an Idoll God of him, such as were the *vanities of the heathen*, as if he *had eares and heard not*, *eyes and saw not* your need, &c. Such a *God* as *Elias* mockt, *You must speak aloude* (saith he) *he may be in a journey, &c.* Even such a *God* do you make the *God of heaven and earth* to be, whilest you put no more confidence in him, or make no more reckoning of your *prayers* to him, then the *heathens* did of their *sacrifices* to their *gods*. Petitioners do not onely put up their request, but use to wait at great mens doores, and enquire, and listen what answer is given unto them; and

and it is part of an *honour* to great men that wee doe ſo: and for the ſame end are wee alſo to *waite on God*, As an acknowledgement of his *greatneſſe*, and our *diſtance* from him, and *dependance* upon him; as *the eyes of the ſervants looke to the hand of their Maſters; ſo doe wee* (ſaith *David*) *on thee, till thou haſt mercy on us.* And *Pſalme* 130. after he had prayed, *verſe* 2. hee ſaith, he *waited more than they that watch for the morning*, like thoſe that having ſome great buſineſſe to doe on the morrow, long for the day light, and looke often out to ſpy the day, ſo he for a glimmering, and dawning of an anſwer. Chap. 1.

Pſal. 123. 2.

Cap. 1.

answer. The like we have *Psal.* 5. 3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and looke*, that is, for an answere.

Reas. 3. If God give an answer, we make him speake in vaine.

Againe, 3. If God doth give you an answer, if you minde it not, you let God speake to you in vaine, when you doe not listen to what hee answers: If two men walke together, and the one, when himselfe hath said, and spoke what hee would, listens not, but is regardlesse of what the other answeres, hee exceedingly slights the man: As *non respondere pro convitio est*, not to answere againe is contempt, so *non attendere*, not to attend to what one sayes:

ſayes: Now our *ſpeaking* to God *by prayers*, and his *ſpeaking* to us by *anſwers* thereunto, and to ſtudy out his dealings with us, by comparing our prayers and his anſwers together which are as *Dialogues* between us and him, is one great part of our *walking with God.* It is ſaid of *Samuels* Prophecy, *that not a word of it fell to the ground:* and ſo it may be ſaid of our prayers; and ſo it ought to be of *Gods anſwers, not a word of them ſhould fall to the ground:* as there doth, if you by your obſervation, and liſtning thereunto catch them not (as *Benhadads* ſervants are ſaid to do *Ahabs* words) appre-

Cap. 1.

1 Sam. 3. 19.

Cap. 1.

apprehend, and obſerve them not: and by the ſame reaſon that you are to obſerve the fulfilling of Gods promiſes, you are of your prayers alſo: now, 1 *Kings* 8. 56. it is ſaid, *not one word failed of all he promiſed.* *Solomon* had obſerved this by a particular ſurvay, and regiſter made of all that *God* had ſpoken and done for them, and found not a promiſe unperformed: and there is the like reaſon both of anſwers to prayers, (for *prayers are but putting promiſes into ſuite*;) and for our obſerving of them: and therefore *Solomon* brings thoſe words in there, to this very purpoſe, to confirme

firme their faith in this, that no prayers made, would faile, being grounded on a promise, thereby to encourage others, and his owne heart to diligence herein, as also as a motive unto God to heare him; for *verse* 59. hee inferrs upon it, *Let my words be nigh thee*, &c. Seeing thou alwayes thus performest thy good word unto thy people. Chap. 1.

4. Yea, you will provoke the *Lord* not to answer at all, he will forbeare to answere, because hee sees it will be thus in vaine. When a man is talking to one that listens not to him, hee will cease to answere, and leave off speaking, *Reas.* 4. God may be provoked, not to answer at all.

Cap. 1. ing, and so will God. So as that which the *Apostle* Heb. 10 36 saith of *faith*, that it is *not enough to beleeve, but when you have done the will of God, you have need of patience* to eke out faith, that *you may inherite the promises*, may bee also said, and is alike true of praying: it is not enough to pray, but after you have prayed, you have need to listen for an answer, that you may receive your prayers; God will not fulfill them else. As he said, *The Sermon was not done*, when yet the Preacher had done, because it is not done till practised: so our prayers are not done, when yet made, but you must

must further waite for, and attend the accomplishment. Cap. 1.

5. If you observe not his answers, how shall you blesse God, and returne thankes to him for hearing your prayers: *Psalm.* 116. 1, 2. *I love the Lord, because hee hath heard my voyce, and my supplication*, and therefore he goes on to thanke him, throughout the whole Psalme. You *are to watch unto prayer, with thankesgiving*: and therefore, as to watch, to observe, and recollect your owne wants, which you are to pray for, that you may have matter of requests to put up, so also to observe Gods answers for *Reas.* 5. We shall not return thanks to God for hearing us. Col. 4. 2.

Cap. 1.

for matter of thankesgiving; and many fill that common-place-head full of matter, to furnish them for petitioning, but as for this other of thankesgiving, they watch not unto it against they come to pray, nor study matter for that head also; and if any study will furnish you this way, it is the studying out of Gods answeres to your prayers: The reason you pray so much, and give thankes so little, is, that you minde not Gods answeres: you doe not study them. When we have put up a faithfull prayer, God is made our Debtor by promise, and wee are to take notice of his payment

ment, and give him an acknowledgement of the receipt of it, he loseth of his glory else.

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6. As God loseth, so your selves also the experience which you might get hereby. 1. Both experience of God and his faithfulnesse; which will cause in you, hope and confidence in God another time, when you have found him againe and againe answering your prayers. It was a speech of one eminent in holinesse, upon occasion of the accomplishment of a great request made to God by him, That God having never denied him any request; *I have tried* God *often,*

Reas. 6. We lose much experience.

1. Of Gods faithfulnes to us.

Cap. 1. *often now* (fayes hee) *henceforth I will trust him*, if the hearing the prayers of another, will encourage us to goe to God, (as *Psal.* 33. 5. *For this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto thee*) much more when wee obserue, and have experience that our owne are heard: Therefore (fayes *David*) *Psalm.* 116. 1, 2. *The Lord hath heard mee, and I will call upon him as long as I live*: as if hee had said, Now that God hath heard mee, now I know what to doe: this experiment, if I had no more, is enough to encourage mee for ever to pray unto God: I have learned by it to call upon him,

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as long as I live. And also 2. by observing Gods answers to your prayers, you will gaine much insight into your own hearts, and wayes, and prayers; and may thereby learne how to judge of them. So *Psalm.66. 18,19* *Davids* assurance that hee did not regard iniquity in his heart, was strengthened by Gods having heard his prayers; for thus he reasons, *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, God *will not heare mee: But* God *hath heard me.* For 1. if God doth not grant your petitions, it will put you to study a reason of that his dealing: and so you will come to search into your prayers, and the ca-

Cap 1. 2. Of our own hearts and wayes towards him.

Cap 1.

riage of your hearts therefore, to see whether you *did not pray amisse*; according to that, *Ye lust and have not, because ye aske amisse*, *Iames* 4.3. As if you send to a friend, who is punctuall in that point of friendship of returning answeres, and useth not to faile, and you receive no answere from him, you will beginne to thinke there is something in it: and so also here, When a Petition is denied, you will be jealous of your selves, and inquisitive, What should bee the matter, and so by that search come to see *that* in your prayers, which you will learne to mend the next time. Or 2. if they be answered,

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swered, yet because that therein usually God deales in a proportion with you to your prayers, (as you might perceive if you would observe his dealings with you) you would by this meanes come to have much insight into Gods acceptation, and opinion of your wayes: For you should see his dealings with you, and yours with Him, to be exceeding parallell and correspondent, and hold proportion each with other. So *Psalm.* 18.6. *In my distresse I called upon the Lord*, and so *vers.* 7, 8, &c. hee goes on to describe his deliverance which was the fruit of those prayers, and then

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at 20, 21. verſes, &c. hee addes his obſervation upon both, *According to the cleanneſſe of my hands hath hee dealt with mee, &c. For with the pure thou ſhalt ſhew thy ſelfe pure.*

Reaſ. 7. We ſhall loſe much comfort,

7. You will loſe much of your comfort: there is no greater joy then to ſee prayers anſwered, or to ſee ſoules converted by us, *Iohn* 16. 24. *Aske and you ſhall receive that your joy may be full*: the receiving anſweres makes joy to abound and overflow. Yea, even when we pray for others, if our prayers be anſwered for them, our joyes are exceeding great; much more when in our owne behalfe: and therein, even in

in the ſmalleſt things which a Chriſtian doth enjoy, doth his comfort exceed anothers, that hee hath them by vertue of prayers, and promiſes: hee knowes how hee came by them; *If ſtolne waters bee ſweet, And bread eaten in ſecret*, &c. (as *Solomon* ſaies) to wicked men; *beg'd meat is much more ſweet* to godly men: yea, in the very praying for outward mercies, there is more ſweetneſſe, then they have in enjoying them. As it is joy to a good heart to ſee any one converted, but much more to him that is the meanes of it. *I have no greater joy* (ſayes S. *John*) *then that my children walke*

Cap. 1.

Prov 9.17

Chap. 1. *in truth*: So to ſee God doe good to his Church, and heare others prayers, is a comfort, but much more to ſee him doe it at a mans owne prayers. Therefore when God reſtores comfort to a drooping ſoule, he is ſaid, *Eſay*, 57. *To reſtore comfort alſo to his mourners*, that is, to thoſe that prayed and mourned for him, as well as unto that ſoule it ſelfe, it being a comfort to them to ſee their prayers anſwered. Comfort it is many wayes:

1. To heare from God; as to heare from a friend, though it bee but two or three words, and that about a ſmall matter, if there bee at the bottome this

this ſubſcription, *Your loving father*, or, *Your aſſured friend*, it ſatisfies abundantly: ſo alſo, [2] To know that God is mindefull of us, accepts our works, fulfills his promiſes: [3] How doth it rejoyce one to finde another of his minde in a controverſie: but that God and wee ſhould bee of *one minde*, and concurre in the deſire of the ſame things; *not two in the earth onely agree*, but God who is in heaven and wee to agree, this rejoyceth the heart exceedingly. And thus it is when a man perceives his praier anſwered. Therefore you loſe much of your comfort in bleſſings, when you doe not obſerve anſwers to your prayers.

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Mat. 18. 19

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Chap. II.

Three cases propounded: The first, concerning prayers for the Church, and for the accomplishment of such promises as may fall out in ages to come.

NOw as for rules, and helpes to find out *Gods* meaning towards you in your prayers, and to spie out answeres; and how to know when God doth any thing in answere to your prayers, this is the next thing to bee handled: wherein first, I will answere some cases, and queries which may fall out in severall sorts of prayers, about

about the answering of them: Cap. 2.

1. As first, concerning prayers put up for the Church, for the accomplishment of such things as fall out in all ages to come.

2. Concerning prayers made for others of your friends, kindred, &c.

3. Concerning those prayers, whether for your selves or others, wherein others joyn with you.

§. 1. The full answer to such prayers is to come.

For the first. First, there may bee some prayers, which you must be content, never your selves to see answered in this world, the accomplishment of them not falling out in your time: such as

Cap. 2.

are thoſe you haply make for the calling of the Iews, the utter downfall of Gods enemies, the flouriſhing of the Goſpel, the full purity and liberty of Gods Ordinances, the particular flouriſhing and good of the ſociety and place you live in: all you whoſe hearts are right, do treaſure up many ſuch prayers as theſe, and ſow much of ſuch precious *ſeed*, which you muſt be content to have the Church (it may be) in after Ages to reap: All which prayers are not yet loſt, but will have anſwers: for as God is an *eternall God*, and *Chriſts righteouſneſſe an everlaſting righteouſneſſe*, and therefore of

eter-

eternall efficacy, *Dan.9.24. Being offered up by the eternall Spirit, Heb.9.14.* So are prayers also, which are the work of the eternall Spirit of Christ, made to that God in his Name, and in him are eternally accepted, and of eternall force, and therefore may take place in after Ages. So the prayer that S. *Stephen* made for his persecutors, took place in *Saul* when S. *Stephen* was dead. So *Davids* prayer against *Iudas*, *Psal.* 109.8,9. took effect above a thousand yeers after, as appeares, *Acts* 1.20. So the prayers of the Church for three hundred yeers in the Primitive times, that *Kings* might *come to* *the* Cap. 2.

Cap. 2. *the knowledge of the truth*, and *they leade peaceable and quiet lives in all godlinesse and honesty*, (which S. *Paul* in *Nero's* time exhorted unto, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2.) were not answered, and accomplished till *Constantines* time, when the Church brought forth a Man childe. So *Esay* 58. after he had exhorted to, and given directions for fasting and prayer in a right manner, he adjoyneth this promise: Thou shalt *raise up the foundation of many generations; thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach*, namely for this, because his fasting, and prayers might have influence into many ages yet to come, in the

Revel. 12 5.

accom-

accomplishment of what was prayed for. And that which Christ sayes of the Apostles, reaping the fruit of S. *Iohn* the Baptists ministery, and the seed he had sown, is in like manner herein verified; *Iohn* 4. 37. *One soweth and another reapeth.* And in this sense that which the Papists say is true, that there is a common treasury of the Church, not of their *merits*, but of their *prayers*: there are *bottles of teares* a filling, *Vialls* a filling to be powred out for the destruction of *Gods* enemies: what a collection of prayers hath there been these many Ages towards it? and that may be one rea- Chap. 2.

son

Cap. 2.

son why God will do such great things towards the end of the world, even because there hath been so great a stock of prayers going, for so many ages, which is now to be returned: and herein it fals out to us in our *prayers*, as in their *propheeies* to the *Prophets* of old, *The Spirit in them did signifie the sufferings of* Christ, *and the glory that should follow. Vnto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things that are now revealed*: and thus is it in the *spirit of prayer*, which is in stead of the *spirit of prophecy*: for we pray through the guidance of the *Spirit*

1 Pet. 1. 11.

(who

(who teacheth us what to aske) for many things that come to passe in after Ages. Chap. 2.

§. 2. Yet they may have an answer at present, in assurāce both that they shall come to passe, and of the acceptation of our persons for them.

Onely at present, it may be, in prayer thou hast revealed unto thee by a secret impression made on thy spirit, that these things shall come to passe, and so hast thy faith confirmed in them, and withall an evidence, that even for thy prayers, among others, God will performe them; and that the contribution of thy prayers, doth help to make up the summe: and upon such prayers God usually for the present also testifies the acceptation of a mans person, and reveales himselfe

Cap. 2.

selfe most to him that he is his; as he did to *Moses*; he never revealed his love to *Moses* more, then when he prayed most for Gods people. And haply thou hast that as one of thy best evidences of the uprightnesse of thy heart, that thou canst pray for the Churches good, though for a long time to come, which thou mayest never behold with thine eyes, even as *David* also did, and rejoyced in it.

§. 3. And in heaven we shall rejoyce at the accomplishment of them: and at the day of judgement.

And when they are accomplished, and thou in heaven, thy joy will surely be the more full for these thy prayers, as at the conversion of those thou hast prayed for, so at the

the ruine of the Churches enemies, &c. whom thou didſt pray againſt; For if there bee *joy in heaven at the converſion of a ſinner*, (as at the birth of a new Prince and Heire of heaven) then haply in a proportion hee ſhall rejoyce moſt, whoſe prayers had moſt hand in it, and a ſpeciall intereſt therein. And ſo as thy other *workes*, ſo thy prayers *follow thee*, and *the fruit of them*, as *Ieremy* ſpeakes: and how ever, yet at the day of Judgement thou ſhalt rejoyce, as well as they that enjoyed the fruit of thy prayers in their times, thou having ſowne the ſeed of their happineſſe; *both hee that ſowes*

Cap. 2.

Ier. 17. 10.

Cap. 3.

sowes, and he that reapes shall then rejoyce together, as Christ saies, *Ioh.* 4. 36.

Chap. III.

The second Case, concerning prayers made for others: of our friends. &c, How they are answered.

THe second case is, concerning answeres to our prayers for others, for particular men, as friends, and kindred, &c. and likewise for temporall blessings.

Pray for others we ought.

Pray for others you know wee must: so the Elders of the Church for those

Chap. 3.

those that are sicke, *Iames.* 5. 15, 16. *Pray one for another* saies Saint *Iames*: as in case a man is troubled with a lust, tell some private friend of it, *Confesse your sinnes one to another*; that when a mans owne prayers are not strong enough to cast it out, it may bee done by the helpe of anothers prayers joyned with his. (So it followes, *That ye may be healed*, verse 16. For in that sense I understand healing, in ver. 16.) So also, 1 *Iohn* 5. 16. *If a man see his brother sin a sinne, which is not unto death*, that is not against the *Holy Ghost*, *hee shall aske life for him, and GOD shall give him life, that sinnes no unto death.*

Con-

Cap. 3.

Concerning this case I give these considerations, how such prayers are answered.

§. 1. Such prayers for others God often granteth.

1. Consideration. Such prayers God often heareth; why else are any such promises made? as *That they shall bee healed in their bodies*, James 5. 15. *Healed of their lusts*, *vers.* 16. *Converted to life*, 1 Joh. 5. 16. God hath made these to encourage us to pray, and to testifie his abundant love to us; that it so overflowes and runnes over, that he will heare us, not onely for our selves, but for others also: which is a signe we are in extraordinary favour. So God intimates concerning *Abraham*,

him, to *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 7. *He is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live*: and as *he* was a *Prophet*, so *we are Priests*; as for our selves, so for others also, to *GOD our Father*: and it is a prerogative wee have through the fellowship wee have, and communion of CHRISTS *Priestly Office, who hath made us Kings and Priests*, to prevaile and intercede for others; and a speciall token and pledge of extraordinary love. For if God heares a mans prayers for others, much more for himselfe in his owne behalfe. So when Christ healed the man sicke of the palsie, it was, as it is said,

Cap. 3.

Revel. 1. 6.

For,

Cap. 3.

For the faith of the ſtanders by, Matth 9. 2. *He ſeeing their faith, ſaid, Thy ſinnes are forgiven thee*; the meaning is, not as if for their faith ſake he forgave that man his ſins, for, *The juſt doth live by his* (owne) *faith*: but to encourage them, who out of faith brought that ſick man to him; and us all in like manner to bring others, and their plaints, by prayer, before him; he therefore then took occaſion to declare and pronounce forgiveneſſe to that poore man; he therefore then ſaid, *Thy ſinnes are forgiven thee.*

Heb. 2. 4.

§. 2. Yet alwaies they do not prevaile for the patties prayed for.

2. Conſideration: yet ſecondly, prayers for others

thers may often alſo not obtaine the particular thing prayed for them. So *Samuels* prayer for *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 35. So *David* for his enemies, *Pſalm.* 37. 13. Cap. 3.

For it is in this, as it is in the uſe of other meanes and Ordinances for the good of others; God making ſuch like kinde of promiſes to our prayers herein, as hee hath made to our endeavours to convert when wee preach to men: that looke as wee preach to many, and yet but few beleeve, for, *Who hath beleeved our report?* even as many as are *ordained to eternall life*; wee *become all to all*, *and winne but* The reaſon. Rom. 10 16

ſome:

Cap. 3. ſome: So wee pray for many, not knowing who are ordained to eternall life, which whileſt wee know not, wee are yet to pray for them, 1. *Tim.* 2. 3, 4. Onely as where God hath ſet his Ordinance of Preaching, it is more than a probable ſigne hee hath ſome to convert, and uſually the word takes among ſome, though often but a few: ſo when hee hath ſtirred up our hearts to pray for others, it is a ſigne God will heare us for ſome of thoſe we pray for: yet ſo as wee may bee denied. For God doth require it as a duty on our parts, becauſe it is an outward meanes ordained by God

God, by which ſometimes He uſeth to bring things to paſſe, but yet not as ſuch a certaine, and infallible meanes, as hee hath tied himſelfe univerſally unto, to bring the thing to paſſe on his part. Chap. 3.

And though indeed his promiſe to heare and accept the prayer is generall and univerſall: yet the promiſe to heare it, by granting the very thing it ſelf prayed for, is but an indefinite promiſe; ſuch as he makes to other meanes of doing men good, as to our admonitions and reproofes, and to our preaching, &c. *Hee makes ſuch promiſes, becauſe ſometimes he doth heare*, and convert

Such promiſes to hear us for others, being but indefinite, not univerſall.

Cap. 3.

by them. For inſtance, that *promiſe, Iam.* 5. 15. *of healing the ſicke*, cannot be univerſall: for it might then be ſuppoſed as a truth implyed in it, that ſicke men might never die, when as it is *appointed for all men once to die*, ſeeing it may bee ſuppoſed that the Elders may at all ſuch times of danger of death ſtill come and pray with them: but the meaning is, that it is an ordinance, which God hath made a gracious promiſe unto, becauſe *he often* doth reſtore the ſick at their prayers: and therefore upon every ſuch particular occaſion, we are to relie upon God for the performance of it, by an

Heb. 9. 27.

an act of recumbencie, though with an act of full assurance that we shall obtain it; we cannot; the promise not being universall, but indefinite. Chap 3.

Of the like nature are all other promises of things temporall and outward, (of which wee herein speake) as when God promiseth to *give long life* to them that *honour their parents*; *riches and honours to them that feare Him*; the tenour and purport of which promises is not, as if absolutely, infallibly, and universally God doth alwayes performe these to those that are yet truely quallified with the conditions specified in those pro- Illustrated by the like tenour of all promises of things temporall.

Cap. 3. promiſes; The contrary both Scripture, inſtances, and common experience ſhewes: they are therefore indefinitely meant, and ſo to be underſtood by us; for, becauſe when ever God doth diſpenſe any ſuch mercies to any of his, hee would do it by promiſe; *All his waies* to His *being truth*, that is, the fulfilling of ſome truth promiſed; and alſo God having purpoſed in his outward diſpenſation of things here in this world, to beſtow riches and honours upon ſome that feare him, (though not upon all, for how then ſhould Eccel. 7. 2 *all things fall alike to all?* Poverty and contempt upon

on them *that feare God'* even as well as thoſe that *feare him not.*) Hee hath therefore indefinitely expreſſed his gracious diſpenſation herein: requiring anſwerably an act of faith (which principle in us is ſuited to a promiſe, as a faculty is to its proper object) ſuitable to that his meaning in the promiſe; That as he intended not in ſuch promiſes an abſolute, infallible, univerſall, obligation of himſelf to the performance of them to all that feare him: ſo the act of faith which a man is to put forth toward this promiſe, in the application of it for his own particular, is not required

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The faith towards them required to be but an indefinite act of recumbency, not of aſſurance.

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quired to bee an absolute, infallible perswasion, and assurance that God will bestow these outward things upon him, having these qualifications in him; but onely an *indefinite act* (as I may so call it) *of recumbency, and submission*; casting and adventuring our selves upon him for the performance of it to us, not knowing but he may in his outward dispensations make it good to us, yet with submission to His good pleasure, if otherwise Hee disposeth it.

Though of assurance to the promise in generall, yet not in the application of it.

It is true indeed, that that act of *generall assent*, which faith is to give to this promise in the generall

rall abſtract truth of it, is to bee an aſſured certaine perſwaſion and beliefe, that God hath made this promiſe, and that Hee certainely will, and doth performe it unto ſome according to his purpoſe expreſſed therein; which act of generall aſſent, is that *beleeving without wavering*, namely of the truth of the promiſe in generall, which S. *Iames* calls for in *prayer, Iames 1. 6.* But yet that ſpeciall act of *application* (as Divines call it) required in this faith, whereby I am to reſt upon it, for my owne particular, is not required to bee ſuch an undoubted perſwaſion, as to thinke that I ſhall cer- Chap. 3.

Chap 3. tainly have this particular promiſe in kinde fulfilled to mee, for the truth, purpoſe, and intent of the promiſe, is not univerſall but indefinite. So as it is but an *it map bee* (as God elſe where expreſſeth ſuch promiſes, as *Zeph.* 2.1, 2.) that it ſhall be performed to mee: and yet becauſe *it may be* God will perform it unto mee, therefore my duty is to caſt my ſelf vpon God; and put in for it, with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure for the performance of it to mee. So that ſo farre as the truth and intent of it, is reuealed to be infalible, and certaine, ſo far a man is bound to have an anſwerable act of

of *faith*, of certaine and infallible perſwaſion towards it, as to beleeve without wavering that GOD hath made ſuch a promiſe, and will perform it according to His intent in making it, which is *unto ſome*: but yet withall becauſe the tenour of it is but indefinite, and in that reſpect, whether it ſhall be performed to mee or no, is not therein certainely revealed; Therefore God requires not of mee in the application of ſuch a promiſe an abſolute full perſwaſion that hee will performe it to mee in ſuch or ſuch a manner, &c. But onely an act of dependance and adherence with refer- Cap. 3.

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Yet when God ſometimes gives a ſpeciall faith, then we are to be aſſured the thing ſhall be done.

ring it to his wife and righteous good pleaſure towards me.

And yet again, if God ſhould at any time give a man ſuch a ſpeciall *Faith* concerning any ſuch particular temporall bleſſing for himſelf or another, then he is bound to beleeve it thus in particular: as when He gave power to any to work miracles, (as to his Apoſtles Hee did, with a Commiſſion to work them,) then they were bound to beleeve that ſuch and ſuch a miracle ſhould infallibly bee wrought by them; as that the Devils ſhould be caſt out by them, &c. And therefore in this caſe

Chriſt:

Chriſt rebukes His Diſciples, for not beleeving thus upon ſuch particular occaſions, *Matth.* 17. 20. And then it is alſo true, that if God give ſuch a *Faith*, Hee will infallibly perform it: and thus thoſe his words are to bee underſtood, *Matth.* 27. 22. *Whatſoever yee aske in faith beleeving, ye ſhall receive*, he ſpeaks it of the faith of *miracles*, for 21. *verſ.* he had ſaid, *If ye beleeve and doubt not, yee ſhall ſay to this Mountain, remove into the ſea, and it ſhall be removed*: ſo that when God, works ſuch a faith, and we are called to it, we are bound to beleeve with a certain perſwaſion that ſuch a thing

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An objection prevented.

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thing will bee done and it ſhall bee done, but unto ſuch a kinde of ſpeciall faith in temporall promiſes for our ſelves or others, GOD doth not now alwayes call us. If indeed at any time wee did beleeve and doubted not, by reaſon of a ſpeciall faith wrought by GOD, that GOD would remove a Mountaine into the Sea, or beſtow any outward mercy, it ſhould bee done: for he that ſtirred up ſuch a *faith*, would accompliſh the thing: but it is not that, which God requires of beleevers, that they ſhould without doubting thus beleeve concerning outward things; the promiſes

miſes rhereof being not universall, but indefinite; and therefore answerably a man is not absolutely bound to beleeve that God will certainly bestow such a temporall blessing on him, no not though hee should have the qualification, which the promise is made unto, the promise being not universall, made to all so qualified, but indefinite to some of such so qualified. The case is the same of beleeving promises made to our praying for others, which is the thing in hand. Chap. 3.

§. 3. Such prayers for others are often returned into our own bosome.

3. When the prayers are thus made out of conscience of our duty for such, whom yet God doth not

Chap. 3.

not intend that mercy unto, then they are returned againe into our own bosomes to our advantage: even as S. *Paul* saith, *that his rejoycing that others preached*, though they lost their labour, should *turne to his salvation*, *Phil.* 1. 20. So prayers for others, though to the parties themselves we prayed for they prove in vaine, yet they turn to our good. So *Psalm.* 35. 12, 13. *When his enemies were sick*, David *he prayed and humbled himself*, and *my prayers* (sayes he) *returned into my bosome*. *David* did by this his prayer in secret for his enemies, testifie the sincerity of his heart to God,

and

and his true forgiveneſſe of them (for it is the uſuall diſpoſition of Gods Children, to pray for them that are the greateſt enemies to them,) and this prayer though it did not profit them, yet it turned to *Davids* own good, it came back, and home againe to him, with bleſſings to himſelf; God delighting in, and rewarding ſuch a diſpoſition in his childe, as much as any other; becauſe therein we reſemble *Chriſt* ſo truely, and ſhew that God is our Father, and our ſelves to have his bowels in us; and God ſtirreth up this praying diſpoſition in his children for their enemies, not

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The reaſon.

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not alwayes that he means to heare them for them, but becauſe hee meanes to draw forth, and ſo have an occaſion to reward thoſe holy diſpoſitions, which are the nobleſt parts of his image in them, and wherewith hee is ſo much delighted; and ſo their prayers returne into their own boſomes, and it is taken, as if they had prayed for themſelves all that while. Thus in like manner, when *Moſes* prayed ſo earneſtly for the people of *Iſrael*, God offered to returne his prayer into his owne boſome, and doe as much for him alone, as hee had deſired that God would doe for them.

them. *I will make of thee a great Nation* (sayes God to him) for whom I will doe as much for thy sake, as thou hast prayed I should doe for these. As in preaching the Gospell, *Christ* told the Disciples, That if in any house they came to preach peace, there were not a *Sonne of peace*, *Luke* 10. on whom the message might take place, and their peace rest, *Your peace* (sayes hee) *shall returne unto you againe*. So is it, if your prayers take not place. Chap. 3. Exod. 32. 13.

§. 4. God often in the end casts such out of our prayers, he intends not to hear us for.

4. If wee have prayed long for those, whom God intends not mercy unto, hee will in the end cast them out of our prayers and

Chap. 3.

and hearts, and take our hearts off from praying for them. That which he did by a revelation from heaven to some Prophets of old, as to *Samuel* and *Ieremiah*, the same hee doth by a more undiscerned worke; that is, by withdrawing assistance to pray for such; by withdrawing the spirit of supplication from a man, for some men, and in some businesses. Now thus hee did with *Samuel*; *How long dost thou mourne for Saul?* 1 Sam. 16. 1. So with *Ieremiah*, Jer. 7. 16. *Pray not for this people:* and this hee doth, because hee is loath when his people doe pray but to heare them; and would

The reason.

would not that ſuch pre- Chap. 3.
cious breath as that of prayer is, ſhould be without its full and direct ſucceſſe, or be in vaine: therefore when hee meanes not to heare, hee layes the key of prayer out of the way, ſo deſirous is hee to give anſwers to every prayer. It falls out in this caſe of praying for another, as in reproving another. One whom God intends not good unto, God will lock up a mans heart towards ſuch a man, that hee ſhall not bee able to reprove him; when towards another, God doth inlarge it as much, where hee intends good; thus it is ſometimes in praying for another;

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another: so as in praying a man shall not be able to pray for, as not to reprove such a man, though his heart was to doe both: but it fareth with him as God threatneth concerning *Ezekiel* towards that people, that he makes his *tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth.*

Ezek 3 26

§. 5. God sometimes answers, whom we prayed not for. The reason.

4. God will heare those prayers for, and answer them in some others, in whom wee shall have as much comfort, as in these wee prayed for: and so it often proves and falls out. God, to shew *hee lookes not as man lookes*, nor chooseth as hee chooseth, lets our hearts be set on work to pray for the conversi-

on

on or good of one he intends not mercy to; and then answers them in some other, whom Hee makes as deare unto us. When God had cast off *Saul*, still *Samuels* heart lingred after him, and hee mourned for him: but God at the same time, when hee bids him cease mourning for *Saul*, 1 Sam. 16. to shew that yet hee accepted that his mourning as it came from him; *Goe*, (sayes he) *and anoint one of the Sonnes of Iesse*, 1 Sam. 16. 1. *Samuel* desired to see a good successor in that government, and he having beene their ruler, it was his speciall care; and he having anointed Cap. 3.

Cap. 3. ointed *Saul*, it exceedingly grieved him, that hee ſhould prove ſo wicked; and God ſaw and anſwered the ground of his deſires; and therefore immediately upon his prayers, ſent him to anoint the beſt King that ever was upon that Throne, who was the iſſue and Man-childe of thoſe his prayers. And againe, when *Samuel* came to anoint one of the ſonnes of *Ieſſe*; when he ſaw *Eliab*, *verſe 6. Surely* (ſaies hee) *the Lords anointed is before mee:* If *Samuel* had beene to chooſe, hee would have choſen him, and would have prayed for and deſired him: but *God ſeeth not as man*

man seeth, verse 7. *and chooseth not as man chooseth*: but in *David* was his prayer fully heard, and answered, and that better. So *Abraham* hee had prayed for *Ishmael*; and *Oh let Ishmael live in thy sight! Gen.* 17. but God gave him *Isaac* in stead of him. So perhaps thou prayest for one childe more then for another, out of thy naturall affection, looking *on his countenance* and stature; as *Samuel* did on *Eliabs*: but yet thy prayers being sincere in the ground of them, in that thou desirest a childe of promise, God therefore answers thee, though in another, for whom yet haply, thy heart Cap. 3.

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heart was not so much stirred; who yet when he is converted, proves to thee as great a comfort; and it is as much as if that other thou didst not pray for, had been wrought upon.

Chap. IV.

The third Case, about such prayers wherein others joyne with us: How therein to discerne the influence of our own prayers.

THe third Case to be considered is, when a man prayes for something with others; or which

which others likewise pray for with him, so as hee is not alone in it, how then should hee know, that his prayers have a hand in obtaining it, as well as theirs? For in such cases *Satan* is apt to object; though the thing is granted indeed, yet not for thy prayers, but for the prayers of those others joyned in it with thee. Cap. 4.

1. If thy heart did sympathize, and accord in the same holy affections with those others in praying, then it is certaine thy voice hath helpt to carry it: *If two agree on earth* (saies *Christ*) *Matt.* 18. 19. the word is συμφωνήσωσιν, that is, if they harmonially a- §. 1. If our hearts were affected in praying with the same holy affections wherein others prayed with us were.

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gree to play the same tune: for prayers are musick in Gods eares, and so called *Melody to God*, *Ephes.* 5. 19. It is not simply their agreeing in the thing prayed for, but in the affections: for it is the affections that make the consort and the melody: now if the same holy affections were toucht, and struck by *God Spirit* in thy heart, that in theirs, then thou doest help to make up the consort, and without thee it would have beene imperfect: yea, without thee the thing might not have beene done; for *God* stands sometimes upon such a number of voices, and one voice casts it, as when hee named

named ten righteous persons to save *Sodome*: when therefore the same holy motive and affections acted thee in thy prayer, which did them in theirs, it was the work of the same Spirit, both in them and thee, and God hath heard thee. Chap. 4.

Especially if God did stir up the same secret instinct in thee, to sympathize with another in praying for such a thing unbeknown one to another, as sometimes it falls out; then surely thy prayers are in it as well as his. You shall observe sometimes a generall instinct of the Spirit, put into Gods peoples hearts, generally

Especially when this sympathy is unbeknown each to other.

Cap. 4.

nerally to pray for or againſt a thing, without each others ſtirring up one another: even as *Ezekiel* by the river *Chebar* propheſyed the ſame things *Ieremiah* did at home at *Ieruſalem*. Thus againſt the time that *Chriſt* the *Meſſiah* came in the fleſh, there was a great expectation raiſed up in the hearts of the godly people, to look and pray for him, *Luke* 2, 27. and 38.

§. 2. By ſome ſpeciall evidence: as firſt, ſometimes by ſome notable circumſtance.

2 God doth uſually, and often evidence to a man, that his prayers contributed, and went among the reſt towards the obtaining of it; as,

1. By ſome circumſtance: as

as for example, sometimes by ordering it so, that that man that prayed most for a thing of concernement, should have the first newes of it when it comes to bee accomplisht: which God doth, as knowing it will bee most welcome newes to him. God doth herein, as wee do with a friend, who we know is cordiall in, and wisheth well to a busines; hee sends him the first word of it, who was most hearty in it, and prayed most about it. Good old *Simeon*, had surely beene earnest in seeking the Lord, as well as the rest in *Ierusalem*, to send the *Messiah* into the world,

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to restore and raise up the ruines of *Israel*, for *God* did reveale to him, that hee should see him before hee died: and therefore to evidence to him his respect to his prayers, God carried the good old man into the Temple, just at the time when the Childe was brought into the Temple, for to *be presented to the Lord*, *Luk.* 2.27,28. And in like manner good *Anna*, *who had served God with fasting and prayer night and day*: God ordereth it so, that she must also come in at the same instant, *Luke* 2.38. By some such like peculiar circumstance or other, doth God often use to witnesse to a mans

heart, that he hath heard him in businesses, prayed for in common with others. Cap. 4.

2. By filling the heart with much joy in the accomplishment of what a man prayed for: which is an evident argument that his prayers did move the Lord to effect it, as well as the prayers of others. Thus that good old *Simeon*, seeing his prayers now answered, he was even willing to die through joy; and thought he could not die in a better time; *Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace.* For when the desires have vented and laid out much of themselves, then when the Secondly by the hearts being filled with much joy in the accomplishment.

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returne comes home, they have an answerable part and share in the comfort of it: and as desires abounded in praying, so will joy and comfort also in the accomplishment. As when a Ship comes home, not onely the chiefe owners, but every one that ventured shall have a share out of the returne, in a proportion to the adventure: so here, though some one whom it mainly concerns hath especiall interest in the mercy obtained, yet thou shalt have thy prayers out in joy from God, that the thing is granted. Saint *Paul* had planted a Church at *Thessalonica*, but hee could not stay to water

water it with his owne preaching, yet when absent, hee waters those Plants which hee had set, with prayers, night and day: 1 *Thes.* 3. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly for you*, sayes hee: and as his prayers were exceeding abundant for them, so was his joy as abundant in them, when hee had heard that they stood stedfast, and fell not back againe; *Now wee live, if ye stand fast in the Lord*, verse. 8. *And what thanks can wee render to God for all the joy wherewith wee joy for your sakes, before the Lord? ver.* 9. Cap 4.

3. If God give you a heart thankfull for a blessing

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sing vouchsafed to another, prayed for by you with others, it is another signe your prayers have some hand in it. S. *Paul* knew not *what thanks to give* for the answering of his prayers, as in that forementioned place. Old *Eli* had put up but one short ejaculatory petition that we reade of, for *Hannah*, and that was, *The Lord grant thy petition*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 17. and for the return of that one prayer, when *Hannah* related how *God* had answered her, *vers.* 16, 27. he returned solemn thanks, *And he worshipped the Lord there*, *ver.* 28.

§. 3. Especially when the thing obtained concernes a mans own particular.

And lastly, in case the thing concerned thy self, which

which was prayed for by others helping thee therein, what cause hast thou but to thinke that it was granted for thy owne prayers, and not for theirs onely: seeing God stirred up their hearts to pray for thee, and gave thee a heart to pray for thy selfe, and besides, gave thee the thing which thou desiredst: which argues thou art beloved aswell as they, and accepted aswell as they. *I know this shall turne to my salvation through your prayer*, saith S. *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 19. though their prayers went to the businesse, yet had not S. *Paul* beene accepted himselfe, the prayers of all the men in Cap. 4.

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in the world, would have done him but little good. God may heare the prayers of the godly, for wicked men, when they doe not pray themselves, in temporall things; so hee did heare *Moses* for *Pharaoh*, *Abraham* for *Abimelech*; and he may heare godly men the sooner for others prayers; so hee heard *Aaron* and *Miriam* the sooner, for *Moses* his sake, *Numb.* 12. 13. But if God stirs up thy heart to pray for thy selfe, as well as others for thee, then God that gave thee a heart to pray, hath heard thy prayers also, and hath had a respect to them more in it then to theirs, because

because it concerned thy selfe, as a more speciall mercy unto thee. Chap. 5.

CHAP. V.

Common *directions helpfull in all cases and prayers. First, from such observations as may bee taken, from* before, *and* in praying.

HAving premised these Cases, I come now to more *generall* and *common directions* to helpe you in discerning and observing the minde of God, and his answers to you in your prayers. All which directions

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ctions are such, as may be helpefull in all the forementioned cases, and in all sorts of prayers whatever. And they are taken from *observations*, to bee made upon your prayers, &c. Both *before*, *in*, and *after* praying.

§. 1. *Before*: when God prepares the heart to pray.

First, *Before praying*, when God bespeakes a prayer (as I may so speak) that is, when God secretly speakes to the heart to pray much about a thing; I expresse it thus according to that phrase of *David*, Psal. 27. 8. *Thou saidst seek my face*: and I said, *Thy face Lord will I seeke*: Now God then speakes to the heart to pray, when not onely hee puts upon the

the duty by saying to the conscience, This thou oughtest to doe: but Gods speaking to pray is such, as his speech at first was, when he made the world, when he said, *Let there be light, and there was light*: so he sayes, Let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer, that is, he powres upon a man a *spirit of grace and supplication*, a praying disposition; he puts in motives, suggests arguments and pleas to God; all which you shall finde come in readily, and of themselves; and that likewise with a quickning heat, and inlargement of affections, and with a lingring, and longing Chap. 5.

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ing, and reſtleſſeneſſe of ſpirit to bee alone, to powre out the ſoule to God, and to vent and forme thoſe motions and ſuggeſtions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a *ſpeaking* to the heart: and obſerve ſuch times when God doth thus, and neglect them not; then to ſtrike, whileſt the iron is hot; thou haſt then his eare, it is a ſpeciall opportunity for that buſineſſe, ſuch an one as thou mayeſt never have the like. Suitors at Court obſerve *molliſſima fandi tempora*, their times of begging, when they have

Kings

Kings in a good mood, which they will bee ſure to take the advantage of; but eſpecially if they ſhould finde that that King himſelfe ſhould beginne of himſelfe to ſpeake of the buſineſſe which they would have of him: and thus that phraſe of *Pſalm.* 10. 17. is underſtood by ſome, that *God prepares the heart, and cauſeth the eare to heare*; that is, hee faſhions it, and compoſeth it into a praying frame. And ſure it is a great ſign that God meanes to heare us, when himſelfe ſhall thus indite the Petition. Cap. 5.

And by the way let me give this note of difference, betweene theſe

The difference betweene Satans unſeaſonable urging us to pray, and God moving us

ſpeakings

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ſpeakings to the heart, and thoſe whereby Satan puts us upon ſuch duties at unſeaſonable houres and times; as when we are otherwiſe neceſſarily to be imployed in our callings, to eate, or to ſleepe, &c. then to put upon praying is a device of his he uſeth, to trie out new converts with. The difference will appear in this, the devill comes in a violent imperious manner upon the conſcience, but inlargeth not the heart a whit unto the duty: but whenſoever God at ſuch extraordinary by-times doth call upon us, he fits and prepares the heart, and fills the ſoule with holy ſuggeſtions

geſtions, as materialls for the duty; for whatſoever he calls to, he gives abilities withall to the thing he calls for. Chap. 5.

And thus uſually when he will have any great matters done and effected, he ſets mens hearts a work to pray, by a kinde of gracious pre-inſtinct; he ſtirres them up and toucheth the ſtrings of their hearts, by his Spirit ſent down upon them: Thus againſt the returne of the captivity he ſtirred up *Daniels* heart, *Dan* 9. 1. *Hee knowing by Books*, the time to be neer expiring, was ſtirred up to *ſeek God*: Dan. 9. 2. and ſo he that made this *Pſalme*; *Salvation being then*

Cap. 5. then nigh, ver. 9, 10. then God ſtirred him up to pray, and pen this prayer for their returne: which God had foretold hee would doe, Ier. 29. 10. 11, 12. For having promiſed ver. 10. *I will cauſe you to returne after ſeventy yeares: Then* (ſayes hee, ver. 12.) *ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall goe and pray unto mee, and I will hearken unto you:* he ſpeakes it not onely by way of command, what it was they ought to doe; but as prophecying alſo what they ſhould doe; for then he meant to ſtirre up their hearts; as then hee did, as appeares by thoſe fore mentioned inſtances. Therefore obſerve what things,

things, God, thus by an inſtinct doth inlarge thy heart to pray for at times, and ſometimes at extraordinary by-times, when haply thou diddeſt not think to pray about any ſuch thing, yet hee then ſtirred thee up moſt, it may be, as thou wert walking, &c. and having ſpare time, hee drawes thee into his preſence, and moves thee in that manner ſpecified.

Now ſecondly: as God thus ſpeakes to the heart to pray, ſo alſo *in praying*; and his *ſpeaking* to the heart *in prayer* may be diſcerned by theſe particulars.

1. When God quiets, and

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§. 2.

2. *In prayer:* Gods *ſpeaking* to the heart in prayer, an evidence of hearing: which may be diſcerned,

1. By giving a quiet reſt of ſpirit about the thing prayed for in and by prayer.

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and calmes, and contents the heart in *prayer*, which is done by ſpeaking ſomething to the heart, though what is ſpoken, be not alwayes diſcerned: If you ſhould ſee one, who was an earneſt and importunate ſuitor, and exceeding anxious when he went in to a great man, but behold him after comming out from him contented, and quieted, and cheerefull in his ſpirit, you would conceive that certainly ſomething had been ſaid to him, which gave him encouragement, ſatisfaction, and contentment in his ſuit; Thus when thou goeſt to God, and haſt been importunate in a bu-

neſſe,

sinesse, (as suppose for Christ, *Oh give me* Christ, *or else I die* ! and thy desires were exceedingly up for it; But thou risest up with thy minde calmed and satisfied, and feelest the anxiousnesse, the solicitude of thy heart about the thing taken off, and dispelled; This is a good signe that God hath heard thy *Prayer*, and hath spoken something to thy heart, which makes it thus composed. When *Hannah* out of much bitternesse, and with strong desires (which by a long delay hath been made more violent, so as her heart was much disquieted (for, *Prov.* 13.12. *Hope*, and by the Cap. 5.

Cap. 5. the ſame reaſon, deſire alſo *deferred makes the ſoule ſicke*) when out of the abundance of her griefe, *ſhee had powred her ſoule out before the Lord*, 1 Sam. 1, 16. *Eli* the *Prieſt* joyning in prayer alſo for her, *The Lord grant thy petition*: after that *prayer* ſhe found her heart ſo quieted, *that ſhee looked no more ſad*, as the Text ſaies there; She aroſe quieted, and calmed, and it was that prayer, that did both fill *Elies* mouth, with that word of prophecy, and her heart with quietneſſe, and a ſecret word from God accompanying it, that did ſtill thoſe waves: and accordingly God gave her a Son,

Son, a Son of her desires. And the like God doth now, by speaking (as I said) something to the heart: as by dropping in some promise or other into the heart, or some like consideration; saying as it were to the heart, even as *Eli* from God did to her, *The Lord grants thy petition*; As to S. *Paul*, when hee was earnest with God about removing his buffetings by *Satan* (which whether they were the stirring up a lust, or temptations of *Blasphemy*, I doe not now dispute) *I besought God thrice*, that is, earnestly (saies hee,) *that it might departe*; and to this hee had an answer in Cap. 5.

Cap. 5.

the meane time given him till it ſhould bee taken away; enough to ſtill and quiet him, ſo 2 *Cor.* 12.8,9. And *he ſaid*, that is, in *prayer* the Lord did put in this conſideration and promiſe into his thoughts, And *he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee, and my power is made perfect in weakneſſe*: This anſwer thus comming in, this promiſe thus ſeaſonably ſuggeſted, ſtayed and quieted *Pauls* heart. In like manner thou haſt (it may bee) beene long *praying* againſt poverty, or the like diſtreſſe, and God lets fall this or the like promiſe into thy heart, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake*

Heb. 13.5.

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thee, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an answer, and observe such answers, for they are precious. Chap. 1.

§. 3.

2. If whilest thou art a *praying*, God doth draw nigh to thy soule, and revealeth himselfe to it, in and upon such, or such a particular petition. As in case thou didst mainely intend when thou diddest begin to pray, to set thy selfe to beg some temporall mercy at at his hands, some great matter for the good and prosperity of the Church, (as *Daniel, Chap. 9. did set himselfe* to seeke God for the returne of the Captivity:) and even before thou commest

2 Whē God draws nigh & reveales His love in and upon such a petition.

Cap. 5.

to aske it, or in asking it, God ſmiles upon thee, welcomes thee, falleth about thy neck and kiſſeth thee: This thou art to obſerve as a ſigne hee heares thy *prayer*, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe of GODS favour, and preſence, whileſt thou art upon ſuch a ſuit and requeſt, more than at other times, or then in other paſſages of the ſame *prayer*, this is a token God heares thee, in that particular, and thou art to obſerve this his ſpeaking to thy heart: When thus thou ſhalt no ſooner come into his preſence to enquire of him, but he

hee ſayes, *Here I am*, as the promiſe is, *Eſay* 58, 9. Therefore, *Pſal*, 69. 17, 18. *Here me ſpeedily* ſayes *David, and* (that I may know thou heareſt mee) *draw nigh to mee*: therefore when God drawes nigh to thee, it is a ſigne hee heares thee. *Daniel* having *faſted* and *prayed* for three weekes together, *Dan.* 10. 2, 3: Then an *Angell* came, and one of the three *Perſons* came and told him hee was a man *greatly beloved, ver.* 11 and 19. when in like manner God, by his Spirit comes downe, and meets thee, and tels thy heart in ſecret that thou art *His beloved*, and *He is thine*, Cap. 5.

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then thy *prayers* are certainely heard: for if hee accepts thy person, much more thy *prayers*, 1 *John* 5, 19, 20. Men, false men, (*false upon the ballance*, as *David* speakes, when they come to be tryed and weighed,) they will out of cunning use suitors most kindly then, when they meane to put them off, and deny them their requests: But God who is truth and faithfulnesse it selfe, doth not use so to deale, but when he meanes to answer the *prayer*, Hee withall sometimes reveals his free grace most, to the end they may see and acknowledge the fountaine of all, to be his everlasting

lasting love, and so take the thing granted as a fruit of it, and thereby come to bee the more abundantly thankfull. Cap. 5.

Onely let mee adde this Caution, which may bee of great use to you. That it is not alwayes, infallibly true, that when God drawes nigh to you in a particular request, That that request in particular, shall bee granted in that manner you desired; but it is a certaine evidence that thy *prayer* is heard, and that the thing thou askest is agreeable to his will, and that hee approves of thee and thy request exceedingly, and thinketh the better of thee for it, and

A caution, That yet this is not alwaies an infallible signe the thing is granted, though that the prayer is accepted.

Cap 5. and hee will give thee it, or ſomething that is better. There may be herein and ſometimes is a miſtake of Gods meaning, to thinke that alwayes, then the thing ſhall be granted, when God drawes nigh to a man: experience ſometimes ſhewes the contrary.

Queſt. But you will ſay, Why doth God draw ſo nigh if hee meanes not to grant it?

Anſw. The reaſons why God ſometimes drawes nigh when he grants not the thing. 1. Hee ſhewes thereby His *approving will* of the thing *prayed* for. Now GOD approves many things, hee decrees not. There is his *approving will*, and his decreeing will. God may ſhew his *approving*

ving will of the thing thou askest, (as ſppoſe it bee in view a matter which is of great conſequence for the Church;) which hee doth for thy encouragement: but yet it followes not, that his decreeing will is for the accompliſhment of that very thing in particular. Cap 5.

2. God may accept the perſon and the *prayer*, when hee doth not grant the thing prayed for; and by that drawing nigh witneſſe his acceptation of thy perſon and the *prayer*. Yea,

3. That revealing of himſelfe is oftentimes all the anſwer he intended to ſuch a *prayer*, and it is an-

Cap. 5. swer enough too, to enjoy in the stead of a particular mercy the assurance of Gods love. As suppose thou didst pray against some evill comming upon his Church, which he yet intends to bring; which hee did set thy heart a worke to *pray* against, thereby to manifest the sincerity thereof; and then hee seeing thee thus sincere drawes nigh to thee, and tells thee, however, it shall goe well with thee, and that thou art greatly beloved of Him: Thou art sometime to take this for all the answer hee meanes to give. And this hee doth sometimes also to content the heart, and prepare

prepare it for a denial in the thing: whereas, otherwise the denial of what a Christian hath beene earnest in, might occasion (as in many it doth) a questioning and doubting of Gods love. Cap 5.

3. When *God stirres* up in the heart a particular faith in a businesse: as sometimes Hee doth, and upholds the heart to wait for it, maugre all discouragements. So hee did in *David*, *Psal.* 27. 3. *David* was then in great hazards by reason of *Saul* or *Absolom*, and those such and so often, as that to sense and outward probabilities hee was like never to live quietly againe at *Ierusalem* §.4. God sometimes stirs up a particular faith of assurance in some businesse.

Cap. 5.

ſalem, and enjoy Gods Ordinances there in peace; but for this *David* had *prayed*, and had made it as the grand requeſt of his whole life (as every man hath ſome one great requeſt of all other, even as Hee hath ſome ſpeciall grace above all other, or gift, &c. ſo requeſt to God next to His ſalvation, as haply for his Miniſtery, or the like, therefore ſaies *David*, *verſe* 4. *This one thing have I deſired*) and accordingly God gave him a ſpeciall faith in this thing above all other, becauſe it was his great requeſt, *In this will I be confident*, *verſe* 3. And though *an hoſte* of men ſhould againe

gaine and againe *incompasse mee*, saies hee, yet *in this I will be confident*, that I shall still escape, and see *Ierusalem* againe, and enjoy the Ordinances and live in *peace*; and though his *faith* failed him often (as in the persecution of *Saul* it did) for he said hee *should one day perish by the hand of Saul*: yet at other times his faith was marvellously upheld, and hee was *confident* in this. Hee used not to be so, in other requests thus absolutely particularly and distinctly, and therefore he saies, *In this, &c.* As there is a witnesse of the *Holy Ghost* immediate to the heart sealing up adoption to a mans

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1 Sam. 27. 1.

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mans perſon, ſo in ſome caſes, there is the like teſtimony for the obtaining of ſome eminent thing we have asked. Which particular ſpeciall faith, doth in a kinde of ſimilitude anſwer to the faith of miracles of old, whereby a man had a particular confidence that God would doe ſuch a miracle by him: ſo in and by meanes of prayer, in ſome things there may bee a particular ſtrengthening and aſſuring the heart, that God will doe ſuch a thing for a man: which I confeſſe is rare and extraordinary, as alſo that immediate teſtimony concerning our perſons is, which many want that goe to heaven.

And

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And haply this other concerning the accomplishment of speciall mercies, is much more rare; and but in some businesses; and is a thing which some men are not acquainted with, but yet may bee in some cases existent to some mens spirits, as it was to *Davids* in the thing mentioned.

A caution, that herein a conditionall evidence be not taken for absolute.

And concerning this also I will also adde a Caution, as about the former. That it doth not alwayes fall out upon all such kind of evidences made to a mans spirit, and that by God, that the thing prayed for doth come to passe. For these very perswasions stirred up by God may

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may bee and are often but *conditionall*, though thus immediately made to a mans ſpirit, and are ſo to bee underſtood, and not peremptory and abſolute. It cannot bee imagined that all theſe ſhould alwayes be of greater abſoluteneſſe and peremptorineſſe, then were many of thoſe revelations made by God to the Prophets, wherein Hee manifeſted his gracious purpoſe towards ſuch a man or people, either to vouchſafe them ſuch a mercy, or bring ſuch a judgement; which forewarnings though they were particular and expreſſe, yet limited and intended with

with a condition, according to the performance, or not performance of which, it fell out, either the judgement expresly threatned was diverted, or that good thing which was as directly and fully promised, was not bestowed: as it was in the case of *Ionas* threatning the destruction of *Nineveth*; and so in the promise concerning *Ely's* house, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father should walke before mee for ever, but now the Lord sayes, It shall not bee so:* Foror they had broken the condition which was implied in it; they had despised the Lord; Cap. 5.

Cap. 5. Lord, *and them that despise me,* saies God there, *I will despise.* In like manner is Gods meaning expressed towards us in such like perswasions wrought in us by prayer, to be understood; as that such mercies will surely come to passe, but still under a condition of obedience, and performing of those vowes, which a man joyned with those his petitions, to move the Lord to grant the things, which if a man faile in, or ceaseth to goe on to beleeve, it may and doth often come to passe, that things fall out contrary to that perswasion, and then wee are apt to question whether it

it was from God or no; which it might bee, and truely wrought by his Spirit, and yet not alwayes absolutely meant, (that was your mistake so to take it) but conditionally onely. For in such great requests of the soule unto God, there use to passe mutuall covenants betweene God and us; and Indentures are drawne and sealed unto by us; that is, we in prayer, offer and promise to doe thus and thus, if God will vouchsafe us such a mercy, and plead it to God to move him to bestow it; and God, he thereupon (it may bee) seales a covenant on his part to grant the thing, & works Chap. 5.

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works such an undoubted perswasion; but if wee in that *interim* of waiting for that mercy, doe deale falsely in that covenant which we made; and this even whilest wee are yet in dependance upon God for it, whereby it appears that we would have done so much more after wee should have received it once; in this case God denies the thing, and yet notwithstanding, that perswasion and evidence was from God that heard the prayer. He said indeed hee would doe thus and thus for thee: (as he told *David, I would have given thee much more:*) because thou saidst to him, thou wouldst walk

walke thus and thus, or didst vow this or that to him; thou failest in thy word, upon which *God* uttered his; and thereupon sayes God as to *Ely, Now it shall not be so,* and yet God had spoken it afore, and not Satan, nor thine owne heart onely. Cap. 5.

4. When God doth put a restlesse importunity into the heart, maugre all discouragements. So in that *Psal.* 27. 4. *One thing I have desired, and I will seek after it,* that is, as I have sought it, so I will not leave seeking to God for it: when God maintaines this in the heart, it is a signe hee heares and will answer: for you know the Para- §. 5. Whe God puts a restlesse importunity into the heart, to pray for a particular mercy.

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Parable, that the *unjust Judge* heard her for her *importunity*; therefore when God puts an importunity into the heart, he meanes to heare.

A double importunity: one accepted, not the other.

Onely this likewise is to be added in this, There is a double importunity: one out of such an inordinate desire to a thing, as the heart knows not how to be without such a mercy, and so continues to aske, but *asketh amisse*, and so *receives not*, *Iam.* 5. But there is an importunity joyned with a subjection to *Gods* will, which when it runs along with it, then God hath stirred it up, and then looke for something to come; otherwise you may

may bee importunate, as *they seeke me daily*, when yet God heard not, *Esay* 58.2. Cap. 6.

CHAP. VI.

Further Observations *to bee made, on the dispositions and carriage of our hearts,* after *Prayer: untill the issue of the thing prayed for.*

§. 1. Whē God gives an obedient dependant heart, in walking before him.

NExt: *after thou hast prayed*, observe, what God doth towards thee.

As first, how hee doth guide thy feete and heart *after praying*: there is much in that: that which was the

Cap. 6. the Spirit of ſupplication in a man when hee prayed, reſts upon him as the ſpirit of obedience in his courſe; ſo as that dependance hee hath upon God for the mercie hee ſeekes for, is a ſpeciall motive, & meanes to keepe him fearfull of offending, and diligent in duty; to looke to his paths to walke and behave himſelfe as becomes a ſuitor, as well as to come and pray as a ſuitor. Thus *David*, hee walked by this principle, *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare mee*; that conſideration ſtill came in as a curb unto ſinne; and without this a man provokes God, and ſo caſts himſelfe

himselfe behinde-hand a- Chap. 6.
gaine, and by sinning loseth what ground hee had got by praying. Therefore *David*, *Psal.* 145, 8, 9, 10. when he was to pray, even as for his life, (as then he did, it being a deliverance from his enemies he sought) he specially prayes God to direct him and keepe him, that hee might not sinne against him; for hee knew by sinning hee should enervate and spoile all his prayers: not onely *heare mee speedily* (saies hee) but also *Cause mee to know the way wherein I should walke*; *to Teach me to doe thy will*; this hee especially praies for, and more then for deliverance, for

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elſe hee knew God would not heare him. Therefore when thou art in treaty with God for any mercy, obſerve, doth God ſtill after praying keepe thee in a more obedient frame of ſpirit? it is a ſigne hee intends to anſwer thee; as in like manner, when hee keepes thee from uſing ill meanes, &c. When hee meant to give *David* the Kingdome, hee kept him innocent, and his heart tender, that it *ſmote* him but for *cutting off the lap of Sauls garment*: he was not ſo tender after. Therefore in *Pſal.* 18. when hee was delivered from all his enemies, hee ſayes, *God dealt with him according to his*

up-

uprightneſſe : for I kept my ſelfe from mine iniquity. So alſo *Pſal.* 27.11. Cap. 6.

2. When *God* after prayer ſtrengthneth the heart to wait for the mercy. So *Pſal.* 27. *ult.* *David* having prayed, ſayes to his ſoule, *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen thy heart.* Honeſt men when they nouriſh hopes in one that is in dependance on them, who waiteth and is obſequious upon the hopes he hath of a ſuite, uſe not to deny him: it were diſhoneſty in them to keepe a man under hand, and then fruſtrate his expectations ; Therefore when God keeps thy ſoule after praying in ſuch a dependant

2. When God gives a heart to wait for and expect the mercy.

Cap. 6.

pendant frame, looke for ſome good anſwer. And indeed when a man hath prayed long, in the end he begins to *wait* (as I may ſo ſay) *rather then pray* (though he pray ſtill) becauſe now he looks God ſhould performe: before, and at firſt he told the Lord he *deſired* it, but now hee can with ſome boldneſſe tell him, that *he waites for it and expects it.* The *hope* of a godly man and his expectation *ſhould make him aſhamed* if it were not anſwered, therefore in this caſe anſwers uſe to come.

Both theſe two laſt wee have together joyned, *Pſa.* 37. 34. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his wayes, and he ſhall exalt thee.*

CHAP.

Cap. 7.

Chap. VII.

Observations *to be made* after *prayer, upon the* issue *of what was prayed for: and first*, if accomplished, *whether as the fruit of prayers, or out of common providence; Helps herein.*

When a man hath thus waited, and kept his way, then let him observe the *issue* and conclusion of what he sought for, how things are cast by God. Now of *necessity*, one of these two must fall out, that either the thing desired is *accomplished*, or *not accomplished*; and in either

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ther of these he may come to spie out answers to his prayers; for prayer may be answered, though the thing be not done.

I meane to insist severally on these.

§. 1. *God* sometimes answers the prayer fully in the way and manner desired.

1. If the thing thou prayedst for doth come to passe, then what needest thou doubt of an answer, and whether God heard thee or no? For thou beholdest it with thine eyes: and so often it falls out that God doth grant according to the desires of a mans heart; and not onely so, but also *fulfills his counsell* therein, as it is, *Psal*, 20.4, that is, fulfils not onely his desire, and aime of his prayer, but in that very

very way, by that very meanes, which his judgement and counsell pitcht upon in his own thoughts. The *desire* of the heart may bee satisfied, when GOD gives some other thing, but the *counsell of* the heart is then fulfilled, when a man is answered in that particular, which his owne judgement picht upon as best for him. For counsell is an act of the understanding, deliberating about means to an end, and directing to choose a particular means tending to an end: so that as *Eliphaz* sayes to *Iob*, 22. 27, 28. *Thou shalt make thy prayer to God, and hee shall heare thee: and decree a thing,* Cap. 7.

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and it ſhall bee eſtabliſhed to thee, that is, a man is guided to decree and pitch upon ſuch mercies in his prayers, as God makes good in particular: hee ſayes what hee would have and God performes it: and this priviledge thou ſhalt have (ſaies *Eliphaz* there) if thou wilt turne to him, and bee *acquainted with him*, and *receive the Law from his mouth*: thou ſhalt not erre in praying; but what thou ſetteſt upon to pray for, ſhall bee accordingly granted to thee: ſuch a man ſhall have the priviledge, *Fingere ſibi fortunam* in a right ſenſe, to bee his owne chooſer, and carver of his owne mer-

mercies; and as Christ said, *Be it according to thy faith*, so *God sayes* sometimes, *Be it according to thy prayers*; and *Eliphaz* speakes of it as of a speciall favour, that whereas other mens prayers are answered obliquely, thine sayes hee shall be answered directly, which are more comfortable; as direct beames are, and have more heate in them than collaterall and oblique. Thus if a man will heare God and obey him, God will heare him: for if a man be subject to *Christs Kingly Office*, his *Propheticall Office* shall guide him, and cause him not to erre in his Petitions; but by an unerring Cap. 7.

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providence and preinſtinct iuſuſed by his Spirit, God will ſo guide him, as to aſk even that very thing which God intends to give; whereas of himſelfe *hee knowes not what*, nor how to aske. So *David* asked long life, and *God gave it him*, *Pſal.* 21. 2. 3, 4. God not onely gave him his hearts deſire, but the *requeſt of his lips*, *ver.* 2. *Hannah* askt a ſonne, and God anſwered her in the very thing ſhee deſired, and therefore ſhee called him *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 20, *Becauſe* (ſayes ſhe) *I askt him of the Lord*: and *Verſe* 27, *For this child I prayed, and the Lord* (did not give another thing in ſtead of it, but)

but) *hath given mee my Petition I asked of him.* So, 1 *Chro.* 4. 10. *Iabesh called on God* (tis said) *and God granted him the thing hee requested.* And thus *God* often deales with his children. And to this end hath God given us his *Spirit*; and made *Christ Wisdome unto us*, who knowes what is good for us, though wee doe not. And hath therefore also commanded us to spie out mercies for our selves, and then come to him for them: and to this end hath made such particular promises of particular mercies, which hee would have us have an eye unto in our prayers; all which is, because often he meanes Cap 7.

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Yet our hearts are often jealous, whether it be ananſwer to prayer, or out of common providece.

meanes to beſtow the very things we aske.

And yet becauſe, although wee have the very things wee did aske and deſire, ſuch is the jealouſie & infidelity of our hearts, that we often diſcerne not, nor acknowledge that it was our prayers, that obtained them from God: but we are apt, when once wee have them, either to looke but to things below, and the ſecond cauſes of them, though before wee did earneſtly ſeeke them of God, or elſe ſtill diſtruſtfully to queſtion whether or no it was at our prayers that hee granted them, or out of common providence. Thus *Iob* in his

his distemper, *Iob 9. 16. although I had called, and God had answered me, yet* (saies hee) *I would not beleeve that hee had hearkned to my voice*, that is, not that he did it in respect to my prayer and request, because hee now deales so severely with mee, *For hee breaketh mee with a tempest*, Verse 17. And thus doe our distrustfull hearts, (which are apt to bee unsatisfied with all the cleerest pledges of Gods favour, and still to misconstrue and pervert them,) although God doth answer us upon our calling upon him, yet we will not beleeve that he hearkened to our prayer in it. There- Chap. 7.

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Therefore that you may bee further inabled to discerne, how, and when things you prayed for, come in by prayer; I give you these further directions.

§. 2. Directions to helpe to discerne this 1. From *the manner of Gods performance*: God discovers a more then ordinary hand of providence in things accomplish by prayer: instanced and discovered in 5. particulars.

1 When God doth a thing in answer to prayers, hee often doth it in such a manner, that his hand may bee in a more then ordinary maner seene in it. There are few prayers, wherein a man hath sought God much, but in the answers of them God discovers himselfe much, and turnes many great wheeles in the accomplishment of them, and *manifests* (as *Davids* desires, *Psal.* 17. 7.) *his marvellous*

velous loving kindnesse; and indeed, when God hearts, *prayers*, that have beene a long while a making, Hee shewes usually halfe a miracle one way or other. Chap. 7.

Now God discovers his immediate hand in the answers of *prayers* many wayes.

1. When hee carries a thing through many difficulties, when there were a great many crosse wards in a businesse *prayed* for, the least whereof would have kept the key from turning: when God shall make (as it were) a key on purpose to unlocke it; when God plots and contrives all the passages in a businesse 1. By bringing it to passe through many difficulties.

Cap. 7.

huſineſſe thou didſt *pray* for, and ſo accompliſheth it; This is a ſigne, it is a fruit of *prayer*, and that *prayer* had been a making that key all that while: So in bringing *David* to the Kingdome; *Ioſeph* out of priſon; *Mordecai* to honour: and likewiſe S. *Peter* out of priſon, which was done at the *prayers* of the Church, *Acts* 12. He was ſleeping between two ſouldiers: if they had waked, hee had beene diſcovered: and hee was in chaines, but they fall off, *ver.* 6, 7. And the Keepers ſtood before the doore, but they minde him not, *verſe* 6 and when one watch is paſt, hee paſſeth qui-

quietly through another, *verse* 10. and when both those were past, an Iron gates flies open of its owne accord, *ver.* 10. Now much difficulties are there in many businesses, which yet in the end are accomplished by *prayer*: Iron chaines fall off, Iron gates, enemies hearts flie open of their owne accord; and though not in that miraculous manner, by the meanes of an *Angel*, yet no lesse wonderfully. Chap. 7.

Or secondly when God facilitates all meanes to accomplish the thing which was *prayed* for, so as all meanes doe in view conspire and combine in it, that thou hast winde and Or secondly by facilitating all the means, & causing them to conspire to accomplish it.

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and tyde, and a faire day, and all the way paved; or as *David* sayes, *hast thy way made plaine before thee*; and there falls out a great conjunction and meeting of many circumstances together to effect it, which had influence into it, whereof if any one had beene wanting, haply the thing had not beene done; when the thing *prayed* for is thus granted, *prayer* then hath done it. Thus, when hee delivered the people of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, which was the accomplishment of their long desires and *prayers*, (*their cry came up*, the Text sayes) how were all things facilitated! they that detained

tained them to themselves come, and intreate them to goe out, *yea, are urgent*, sayes the Text; and that at *midnight*: nay, hire them to goe out, with their eare-rings; and *Pharaoh* himselfe then parts lovingly and fairely with them, and desires their *prayers*, *Blesse me also*. Yea, to shew there was no resistance, the Text sayes, *a Dog did not move his tongue*: The brute creatures did not disturb them, though at midnight, when those Creatures use to bee most obstreperous through noises.

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Exod 12. 31,33.35.

Ver 32.

3. When hee doth it suddenly, and accomplisheth the thing thou hast long

3. By bringing it to passe suddenly and unexpectedly.

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long *prayed* for, ere thou art aware of it: as the returne of the Captivity of *Babylon*, which was the concluſion of many *prayers*, was done in a trice, *they were as men in a dream*, *Pſal.* 126. 1. They could ſcarce beleeve it was ſo, when it was done, it was becauſe they had *ſowne* many *prayers* which *came up* on the ſudden, *ver.* 5, 6. So *Peter*, he was faſt aſleepe, and did not ſo much as dreame of deliverance. So *Ioſephs* delivery out of priſon, and advancement to be the greateſt man in the Kingdome, the ſuddenneſſe of it ſhewed it was Gods remembring of him, and hearing

hearing his prayers. Cap. 7.

4. When God grants the thing with an overplus, above what wee did ask, and casteth many other mercies in together with that which wee long prayed for; this also may bee a signe God did heare our prayers in it: for when he doth heare indeed, hee useth *to doe above what wee did aske or thinke*, thereby the more to overcome the heart. So *David* asked *long life*, and hee gave him more than he asked, *Psal.* 21. 2, 3, 4, 5. So *Solomon* he asked but *wisdome*, and hee gave him more than he asked, *Peace, Riches, Honour*, and all with it, 1 *Kin.* 3. 12, 13. *Hannah* shee asked

4 By doing above what was desired with addition of other mercies.

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ked but one male childe 1 *Sam.* 1.10. but God gave her three ſonnes more and two daughters, *Chap.* 2.21, When prayers are anſwered, uſually mercies come thick, they come tumbling in; the thing we prayed for comes not alone: as when ſinnes are puniſhed, then miſeries alſo they come like armies in troops upon us: as *temptations* likewiſe come together, and *wee fall into many of them* at once, as S. *Iames* ſpeakes: Thus doe mercies alſo.

Iam. 1 2.

5. By adding ſome ſpeciall circumſtance as a token of Gods ſpeciall hand in it.

5. When the thing is granted by prayers, there is often ſome particular circumſtance of providence concurrent with it, which

which is a token for good and ſealeth to us that it is from God; ſuch often as a man himſelfe takes notice of, and which others take notice of alſo. *Shew mee a token for good*, ſayes *David*, Pſal. 86. 17. *that others may ſee it and bee aſhamed*: and ſuch tokens doth *God* often make ſmall circumſtances to bee. Things ſmall in themſelves, may bee *magna indicia*, great ſignes and tokens: for example, *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and the *Iſraelites* had lang cried to GOD for the deliverance of his people, and laid up many prayers; *their cry came up* as was ſaid; and when God doth deliver them, what Cap. 7.

Cap. 7. what tokens were there of good? and of Gods hand in it, and of his answer to their prayers? The Text notes (as was observed before) *that a dog did not barke at their going out*, Exod. 11. 7. which was a small circumstance, but it was *magnum indicium*, and so intended by God; for the Text addes, *That yee may know that God puts a difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians*. This was a token of Gods hand, to over-rule the tongues of rude bruit creatures, that use to stirre at such unusuall noises, and at travellers especially in the night. So when *Isaac* and *Abraham*, and his

his servant also, had prayed for a Wife for *Isaac*, see by what a token God shewed he had heard their prayers, *Rebekkah* was the first that came out to the servant sent to bring a wife for him: and if shee bee the woman appointed for *Isaac* (saies the servant) *Let her offer me drinke, and my Camels also*: this was a small thing in appearance, but a great *indicium* of Gods hand in it, and therefore the servant *bowed* at it, and *worshipped*: and the signe in it selfe was such, as argued a good nature in her, and a kinde courteous disposition, which therfore (it may bee) hee singled out,

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Gen 24. 13, 14.

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as a token of a meet wife, as a thing eſpecially to bee looked at in the marriage choiſe.

§. 3. Obſervation from the time wherein the thing prayed for is accompliſht, as,

Againe, the conſideration of the *time*, wherein the things we have asked, are granted, may much helpe us to diſcerne, whether it bee in anſwer to our prayers. For GOD, who doth all things *in weight and meaſure*, ſhewes his *wiſdome* and *love*, as much in the *ſeaſon*, as in giving the thing it ſelfe. GOD conſidereth all times of thy life, and ſtill chooſeth the beſt and fitteſt to anſwer thy prayers in, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee.* So *Eſay* 49. 8, As *David* (in like manner ſayes) he

he prayed *in an acceptable time*, *Psal.* 69. 13. So accordingly God answers in the best and most acceptable time to us; for *he waites to be gracious, for he is a God of judgement*, *Esay* 30. 18. that is, Hee is a wise God that knowes the fittest times and seasons, wherein to shew kindnesses, and to deale forth his favours in. Cap. 7.

I. Sometime the thing is accomplisht about the time wherein we are most instant in prayer.

As first, it may be, that at that very time when thou hast beene most instant and earnest, yea even whilest thou art a praying, or presently after, the thing is done and accomplisht. To this purpose is that of *Esay* 65. 24. That as sometimes *he heares be-*

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fore they call (which argues much love to give mercies unsought) so also *whilest they are speaking, I will heare*, and grant the thing, which argues no lesse love; and he culs out that time on purpose, that they might rest assured that it was in answer to their prayer. Thus to assure *Hezekiah* his prayer was heard, God sent the Prophet in unto him whilest hee was a *praying* and *weeping*, with *his head turned towards the wall*, So *Isaac* going out to *pray* in the field, meetes his *Rebekkah* then a comming; that blessing of a good Wife, being surely the great request temporall

Gen. 24. 63

he

hee was then in Treaty with God for: this *Rebekkah* was the fruit of many prayers. So when S. *Peter* was in prison, the Church being gathered together to pray for him, S. *Peter* comes and knocks *at the same houre*, *Acts* 12. from the 12. *ver.* to the 18. So as it often falls out herein, as to the Ruler in the Gospel, *Ioh.* 4. 52. who *inquiring* diligently, found *that the same houre that Christ had said to him, Thy sonne liveth, his son recovered, and so he beleeved, and his whole household*: So also here, that sometimes the thing is done, or the newes of it comes the same houre or soone after,

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wherein a man was praying about it, and haply then when the heart was moſt ſtirred about it, more than at any time elſe: this is a ſigne it was an anſwer of prayers, and may help to confirme a mans faith in it, as that alſo did his.

2 When granted in the fitteſt time.

Or ſecondly, when it is the moſt acceptable and every way the fitteſt time to have the thing granted. At that time ' when thou *hadſt moſt needs*, *and* ' when thy heart was *moſt fit for it*. For in anſwering prayers, God aimes eſpecially at two things: ' To *ſhew his mercy*, that a man might magnifie and exalt that:

And

And [2] *To have the heart* ſatiſfied and *filled with joy* and contentment in his anſwer, and the thing made ſweet, and a mercy indeed to him: in briefe, that his *goodneſſe might bee delighted in*, and *his mercy exalted*. And for theſe two purpoſes hee culs out ſuch times, when we have moſt need; and alſo when our hearts are moſt ſubdued, and our luſts mortified, For then wee are fitteſt to relliſh his goodneſſe alone, and not to bee drawne away with the carnall ſweetneſſe that is in the thing. The one you have expreſt, *Eſay* 30. 18. *Hee waites to bee gracious to have his mercy exalted*. The ſe-

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The fitteſt time knowne two waies.

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cond intimated *Iames* 5. *Yee aske and receive not, becauſe ye aske amiſſe, to conſume upon your luſts*; Such prayers, whileſt the heart is in this temper, the Lord denies, or deferres in mercie till the heart bee weaned.

1. When wee have moſt need.

For the firſt of theſe: As, ſuppoſe thou diddeſt pray long for aſſurance of ſalvation, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and when thou hadſt moſt need of it, either when *thy ſpirit would have failed* without it, as *Eſay*, 57, 16. Or againſt ſome great affliction approaching, or ſome great encounter with the world for the Name of Chriſt, then God filled thy heart

heart with it, &c. that was the fitteſt time: now hath God heard thy prayer. As S, *Peter* hee was in Priſon, and had beene ſo for many dayes, as appeares by the forth and fifth *verſes*, *Acts* 12. God could have delivered him at any time, while the Church prayed for him, *verſe* 5. But God kept him in on purpoſe, till that very night, when in the next morning *Herod* meant to bring him forth to execution, and then God delivered him at the prayers of the Church; then was the moſt fit time; As the *Pſalmiſt* ſayes, *The full time to have mercy on him was come.* And then Cap. 7. Pſal. 102. 13.

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to receive an answer, is a signe God did it out of speciall love, which love hee *would have exalted by thee*, as *Esay* 30. 18.

2 When the heart was best prepared to receive it, and most weaned from it.

If. 2. when thy heart was *most fit* for the mercy, it was granted, then art thou also heard in an acceptable time: For God doth not with-hold mercies from those that are his, out of want of love; neither so much for what is past, as for the present evill disposition of their hearts, whereby they are unfit to receive them: and in this sense likewise may that bee understood, that GOD *prepareth the heart*; and *heareth the Prayer*, *Psal.* 10. 17.

As

As firſt, when thy heart is moſt weaned from that temporall mercy (ſuppoſing it ſuch) granted thee upon ſeeking of it: So *David*, when hee had the Kingdome in poſſeſſion given him: then, vvhen hee vvas as a *weaned childe*, and had his high thoughts (vvhich haply at the firſt nevves of it had riſen in his minde) purged out, *Pſal.* 131. 2. *I have no high thoughts, &c.* ſayes hee then; Thus, vvhen thy heart had let all carnall ends goe, and had betaken it ſelfe alone to God, for thy portion to bee had alone out of him, then the thing prayed for comes to paſſe: this vvas the fitteſt Cap 7.

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fitteſt ſeaſon.

Obiect.

But you will bee ready to ſay, To have a thing when my heart is taken off from it, and even contented not to have it, makes it to bee as no mercy: for where there is no deſire, there is no rejoycing.

Anſw.

If thy deſire bee taken off the thing, then thou wilt rejoyce the more in GOD now; and though the thing of it ſelfe ſhould now give thee leſſe ſatisfaction, yet God by the thing will give thee more, and he will make it up; for thou wilt reliſh his love and ſweetneſſe in it now, which is *better then life*, and therefore much better

ter than that thing enjoyed; and indeed the violence of the desire before, would have made it lesse sweet, for the thing alone would not have filled and contented that desire, when it was an inordinate lust, and so thou wouldst have beene vexed with it, rather than satisfied, and found a greater vanity in it: but now when it is become a subordinate desire unto God, that the desire is downe, and the heart quieted and contented with God in the thing: the heart sayes as she said, *I have enough*. So 2. likewise thou maist have an affliction thou prayedst long against, taken off then. Chap. 7.

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Lev. 26. 41.

then, when thy heart was moſt willing to *accept thy puniſhment* (as *Moſes*'s phraſe is,) as to ſubmit to God in it.

§. 4. A third ſort of obſervations, from the anſwerable proportion betweene Gods dealing in the accompliſhment of it, and our prayers.

A third thing you are to obſerve concerning the accompliſhment of the thing prayed for, whereby you may diſcern whether granted in anſwer to prayers, is, when thou ſeeſt God in his dealings with thee, and anſwering of thee, to deale in a kinde of proportion with thy manner of praying and ſeeking of him, and of walking with him whileſt thou wert dependant on him, for ſuch or ſuch a mercy. And as you may ſee a proportion betweene

tweene ſinnes and puniſh- Cap 7.
ments, which are the re-
wards of them; that you
can ſay, ſuch a ſin brought
forth this affliction, it is ſo
like the Father: ſo you
might ſee the like pro-
portion betweene your
prayers, and your walking
with God, and Gods anſ-
wers to you, and his dea-
lings with you, So did
David, *Pſal.* 18. 24. *Accor-
ding to the cleanneſſe of my
hands hath hee recompenced
me, &c.* His ſpeech notes
ſome ſimilitude or like-
neſſe: as for example, The
more by-ends or carnall
deſires you had in pray-
ing, and the more you
mingled of theſe with
your holy deſires, and the
more

Cap. 7. more want of zeale, fervency, &c. were found in your prayers, the more you ſhall (it may be) finde of bitterneſſe mingled with the mercy, when it is granted; and ſo much imperfection, and want of comfort in it: ſo ſayes *David* in the ſame *Pſal.* verſe 25, 26. *With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe pure,* Pure prayers have pure bleſſings; *& è contra: With thy froward thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe froward:* and a gaine, as you in praying ſometimes ſlackened and grew cold, ſo you might ſee the buſineſſe in like manner to coole, and caſt backward: as when *Moſes hands were down, Amalek* pre-

prevailed; but when they were *lifted up*, *Israel* had the better, *Exod.* 17. 12. God let him see a proportion, which argued his prayer was the meanes of prevailing. A man findes in praying, that his suite sometimes sticks, and goes not on as he expected, this is because hee gives not so good a fee as he was wont, and doth not ply *God*, and solicite him; but on the contrary, when hee was stirred up to pray, then still he found things to goe well: by this a man may cleerely see, that it was the praier which God did heare and regarded. Thus likewise when a man sees hils and dales in a

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a buſineſſe, faire hopes often, and then all daſht againe, and the thing in the end brought to paſſe, let him looke backe upon his prayers: didſt not thou in like manner juſt thus deale with God? When thou hadſt prayed earneſtly, and thought thou hadſt even carried in, then daſh all againe, by interpoſing ſome ſin, and thus againe and againe? Herein God would have you obſerve a proportion; and it may helpe you to diſcern, how, and when they are anſwered and obtained by prayer; becauſe God deales thus with you therein in ſuch a proportion to your prayers.

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Chap. VIII.

Seven Obſervations *more, from the* effects *which the accompliſhment of the* mercy *hath upon the heart, &c.*

FOurthly, thon mayeſt diſcerne whether they be in anſwer to thy prayers, by the effects upon thy heart.

§. 1. If the thing obtained drawes the heart neerer to God and to rejoyce in his favour in it, more than in the thing.

As 1. If the thing that is granted upon thy prayers, draw thy heart more neere unto God, it is then certaine, that it was granted as an anſwer to thy prayers, Things granted out of ordinary providence onely, doe increaſe our

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our lusts, and are snares to us: as *Saul* gave *David* his daughter *Michol* to be a snare to him: So *their full tables are made snares:* Psa. 69.22 so God gave the *Israelits* their will, the things they desired, but withall *gave them up to their lusts*, *Psal.* 106. 15, hee gave them their requests, but sent *leannesse into their soules*; the Quailes might fat some of their bodies that survived, yet their soules grew leane: there was a curse upon their Spirits: this new delicate food made their bodies more lustfull, they *did eate and* Exod. 32. 6 *drinke, and rose up to play.* But things obtained by prayer are sanctified to us, for

for every thing *is ſanctified by prayer*, ſo as it ſhall not inſnare nor intangle our hearts: a thing obtained by prayer, as it came from God, ſo a man will returne it to God, and uſe it for his glory: So *Hannah* having obtained *Samuel* by prayer, ſhee returnes him unto God, 1 *Sam.* 1. 27, 28. *For this childe I prayed, and God gave me my petition, and therefore alſo I have lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth.* If therefore thou findeſt this his dealing with thee, in anſwering thee, to bee a kindly motive to cauſe thee to mourne for ſin, and to bee as a reſtraint againſt ſinne, it is a ſigne it was the fruit of

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1 Tim. 4. 5.

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of prayer. Thus it wrought with *David*, *Psa.* 6. 8. *Away from me ye that work iniquity: God hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Also if thou rejoycest in God, more than in the thing obtained: so *Hannah* begins her song when shee blesseth God for her child; *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord, &c.* 1. *Sam.* 2. 1. Shee rejoyceth not so much in the gift, as in the giver; and his favour more in this, that her prayer was answered, than in the thing obtained: this is a signe of having obtained the mercy through prayers, when it is thus sanctified unto a mans spirit.

2. Prayers answered will

will inlarge thy heart with thankefulneſſe, and thus uſually they doe; ſelfe-love makes us more forward to pray, then to give thankes; for nature is all of the craving and taking hand: but where grace is, there will bee no eminent mercy gotten with much ſtrugling, but there will bee a continued particular thankefull remembrance of it a long while after, with much inlargement: and *As prayers abounded, ſo will thankſgiving abound alſo. Hannah* ſhee makes a Song, 1 *Sam.* 1. 2. Great bleſſings that are wonne with prayer, are worne with thankfulneſſe: ſuch a man will not ask Cap. 8.

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ask new, but hee will with-all give thanks for old. Thankfulneſſe, of all du-ties, proceeds from pure grace, therefore if the ſpi-rit ſtirs thee unto it, it is a ſigne he made the prayer. *What thankes ſhall I render to God, for the joy I have in you* ſaith S. *Paul*, 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 9 10: So in all his other Epiſtles, all thoſe hee writes to, as he prayes for them, ſo hee tells them he gives thanks for them, and for their graces which he had prayed for. And anſwering prayers for o-thers, makes Saint *Paul* ſo thankfull, what when for himſelfe? Prayer and thankes, are like the dou-ble motion of the lungs,

the

the ayre that is sucked in by prayer, is breathed forth againe by thanks: Is thy heart afresh inlarged, to mourne for past sins long since committed, so in like manner, to give thankes for past mercies woone with long prayers, and this for a long while after? it is a sign that they were obtained by prayer. Chap. 8.

§. 3. If the mercy obtained doth encourage thee to goe to GOD another time, to pray againe the more confidently and fervently, it is a signe thou hast got the former that way: For the *Holy Ghost* having once shewed thee this way of procuring mercy, hence it is, thou

§. 3. If this encourageth thee to go to God againe.

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art thus ready to take the same course another time. *Psal.* 116. 2. *The Lord hath heard me, and I will call on him as long as I live.* I know (saies hee) now what course to take if I bee in any want, even to call upon him; and he calls upon others to doe so too.

§. 4. It makes a man carefull to performe his vows made in prayer, to obtaine it.

4. When God having heard thy prayers upon solemne vowes made by thee, thy heart is made carefull to pay those vowes which thou didst make in the time of thy suing to GOD for that mercy, this may be an argument to thee, the thing being granted, that thy prayer was heard. For first, it argueth, that thy heart

heart it selfe doth secretly make such an account, that upon them God did grant the thing, and thou doest therefore make conscience to returne all again to God in service, as the condition of thy Indentures made with him; and as an homage due, and an acknowledgement for ever, that such a mercy was won by prayer; and by this preservest the memory of the receit of that mercy: vowes being of the nature of homage: and secondly, in this also is an evidence that the thing was obtained by prayer, in that God cals for those vowes from thee, by his Spirit in thy heart,

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and ſtirres thee up to performe them; it argues that in relation to thy prayers anſwered, He takes them as dues from thee, that having diſpatcht thy ſuite, Hee now calls for what was agreed to bee given him when it ſhould bee performed. And thirdly, in that alſo he doth accept the payment of theſe thy vows of thee, he acknowledgeth that thoſe vowes and prayers were heard: for as *Manoah* ſaid in another caſe, *If hee meant to* Iudg. 13. 23. *have deſtroyed me, he would not have accepted a ſacrifice*: ſo in this caſe it may be ſaid, if God had not heard thy prayers, he would not have accepted

thy

thy vowes after thy praying. Thus *David*, *Psal.* 66. 13, 14. *I will pay thee my vowes, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in my trouble*; the reason follows, ver. 19. Because that *Verily God hath heard me, when I cryed to him*: and so *Eliphaz* in *Iob* doth connect and hang these two together, *Iob* 22. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer to him, and he shall heare thee, and thou shalt pay thy vowes*: This which he speakes of paying his vowes, was not onely as it was to bee his duty, but also as a consequent that would follow the other, that when his prayers should be heard.

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he thereupon would performe his vows: for his scope is to move *Iob* to turne to God, shewing what benefit would accrue to him by it, and amongst others this: The hearing his prayers, and performing his vowes.

5. If a man sees by faith, and acknowledgeth Gods sole hand in the accõplishment.

5. When thou art inabled by faith, to see cleerly *Gods* hand shewed forth in the effecting of that mercy over and above the power of second causes, and to acknowledge it to his glory: for the truth is, one maine cavilling reason in our blind hearts, whereby wee are usually hindred and put by from apprehending our prayers to be answered, when

yet

yet the thing is done, wee shall finde to bee, that our eyes are terminated and bound in second causes, and not raised to see Gods hand in the thing: therefore on the contrary, when God inableth thee to see that hee hath done thee this kindnesse; so as thy minde is cleere in it, this is a fruit of his hearing thy prayers: And this you will usually finde to bee true, that *so much faith and dependance* as you had upon *God in prayer* for the obtaining of a mercy, *so much faith and acknowledgement you will have in the accomplishment of it*. Parallel with his rule is that other, which in Cap. 8.

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another case is usually given, that in performance of duties, so much as the soule did go out of it selfe to God, for strength to performe them, so much when they are performed, will the heart acknowledge *Gods* assistance and be humbled: And this is a signe of prayer being heard upon this ground, because Gods end of hearing prayers is, that we *might glorifie him*. So *Psal.* 50. 15. *Call upon mee in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie mee.* Therefore when the heart hath prayed much for a mercy, with dependance before the obtaining of it, and then

is enabled to exalt God when it is obtained, it is a signe that God did it in relation to those prayers. For there is that connexion made betweene these, as betweene the cause and the effect, *I will heare thee, and thou shalt glorifie mee David*, when he was delivered out of all his troubles, (as when hee made that 18. *Psal.* he was, as appeares by the title of it) then at the 6. verse, he relates how he had prayed and how hee was heard; and see thereupon how his heart was enlarged to acknowledge God alone to have done all, in the rest of that Psalme, so from the 27. and also from the

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31. ver. When wee see Angels from God, beyond the power of second causes descending, it is a signe, that prayers, as Angels, first ascended, and obtained that mercy. Thus also the Church *Esay* 26. having obtained those deliverances by prayer, ver. 17. (for which there she makes that song by way of thankfulnesse) she ascribes all unto God, ver. 12, *Thou hast wrought all our workes for us*, and ver. 18. *Verily we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth.*

§ 6. With the mercy, sometimes a speciall evidence comes in, that it is obtained by prayer.

6. When with the mercy there commeth the assurance of Gods love, and evidence of his favour;

when

when GOD ſends not a bare token onely, but a letter alſo with it, to beare witneſſe of his love, in which the token is wrapt. I need not make that a ſigne, for when this comes with a mercy, it carries i s owne evidence, you will then know well enough that it is the fruit of prayer. Cap. 8.

7. Laſtly, it will be evident by the *event*; things obtained by prayer have few thorns in them, the curſe is taken out, but what comes but by ordinary providence, comes as it were up of it ſelfe alone, and like the earth untilled, is full of thornes, and briers, and many vexations: §. 7. By the event; things obtained by prayer, prove reall and ſtable mercies.

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ations: The reason is, for what comes in by prayer comes as a blessing, and *so no sorrow is added to it*; and also because prayer killeth those inordinate lusts, which is the cause of that vanity and vexation which is in the things enjoyed. *But when the blessing of God maketh rich, he added no sorrow with it*, Prov. 10. 22. Things long deferred, at last obtained by prayer, prove most comfortable; and in a setled manner such; they prove standing and stable blessings; and what trouble the heart was put to in the deferring, it is recompenced by the more setled constant immixt sweetnesse

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neſſe in the enjoying: a prayer having long perfumed it, and the thing being ſteeped therein, it proves exceeding pleaſant. So *Prov.* 13. 12. *Hope deferred makes the heart ſick, but when the deſire comes, it is a tree of life,* and heales that ſickeneſſe, and abundantly comforts the heart. Thus *Iſaac* found *Rebekkah* a great bleſſing, and *a comfortable* wife to him, *Gen.* 24. *ult.* Such a comfort alſo was *Iſaac* to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17, 18, 19. *A ſonne* indeed, *a ſonne of laughter*, as his name ſignifies: and ſuch was *Samuel* to *Hannah*, ſhee had not onely a ſonne of him, but a good ſonne, a bleſſed ſon

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fon, a Prophet, and the Judge of the people of God: whereas *Iacob* getting the bleſſing, but without prayer, how imbittered was it to him, (though a bleſſing to him in the event) by twenty yeers baniſhment from his mothers houſe? When *Iſrael* themſelves ſet up a King, but not *by me*, as God ſaies, what a puniſhment was he to them? *given in wrath, and taken away in anger*: Hoſ. 13. 11.

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Chap. IX.

Considerations *to quiet the heart, and to help it to discerne an answer to, and acceptation of the prayer* when the thing is not accomplisht.

§. 1. The thing prayed for is not alwaies granted, when yet the prayer is heard.

But now the next and more difficult question is, *When the thing is not granted*, how shall we then discerne and know, that God doth notwithstanding heare the prayer?

Concerning which, I must premise this, that it is true, that alwayes the very thing it selfe desired is not granted, when yet the prayer is heard. Christ

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Christ prayed, *the Cup might passe from him*, which though some interpret the word *passing*, for the short continuance of the brunt, and that therefore in that respect hee was heard directly in what hee asked: yet if so, why was that clause *if it be possible*, added? that argues his petition was for a totall removall, yet with subjection to Gods will; for he knew there was no great impossibility in a short removall of it: nay, it was impossible but that it should passe, *Act.* 2. 24. But howsoever, it is plaine in *Moses*, about his going into *Canaan*: *Deut.* 3. 26. *I besought the Lord* sayes

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sayes hee, *verse 23. and hee was angry with mee, and would not heare me, ver. 26.* Likewise ere I come to resolve the case, an objection is also to bee removed, which is,

That if the Spirit of GOD doth make every faithfull prayer in us, as *Rom. 8. 26.* it is said Hee doth; *wee know not what to pray for, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, &c.* and he *searcheth the deep things of God*, as it is said, *1 Cor. 2.* that therefore he knowing that GOD will not grant such a thing, you may thinke that he should not stirre up the heart to pray for that which God meanes to deny, but alwayes.

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wayes guide the heart aright, and not let us erre or misse in the things wee *pray* for. To this, in briefe by way of answer.

An objection answered: That though the Spirit knowes Gods mind, and teacheth us what to pray for: yet the thing prayed for may not bee granted.

1. The Spirit makes not prayers in us, alwayes according to what Gods secret will and foreknowledge is, but according to his revealed will to us, both in his word, and in his providence, as things therein are presented to us, and doe lie before our view, and so not alwayes according to what hee meanes to doe, but according to what it is our duty to pray most for: for hee concurres to assist us to *pray*, as he doth in *preaching* or using other such like

like meanes and Ordinances, wherein though the Spirit knowes whom God meanes to convert, whom not, yet he assists us Ministers in our spirits oftentimes as much to *preach* to those hee means not to convert, as to those hee means to convert: Hee dealing with us therein according to what is our duty, not according to what is his decree. Cap 9.

Againe, secondly, that phrase helps to answer this, when hee is said to *help our infirmities*, and therefore not according to his owne vast knowledge, doth he frame our *prayers*, but so, as hee applies his assistance to our infirme,

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infirme, weake, and narrow apprehensions, and stirres up desires in us to such things, as according to our knowledge wee are in duty to conceive, and which by all wee can see, by what is afore us revealed in his providence, we thinke to be most for our good, and his glory, and God accepts such *desires as from us*, but yet *doth for us* according to the largenesse of his owne love.

§. 2. A mistake to pray absolutely for such blessings as are not absolutely promised.

And so now to come to the case propounded, and therein unto helps to pacifie, and direct the heart about those prayers at which the things are not granted.

And

And first, how diddest thou frame thy *prayer* for that thing which is denyed thee? Didst thou *pray* for it absolutely, and peremptorily as simply best for thee? thou mast not then thinke much, if such a *prayer* bee denyed, for therein thou wentest beyond thy commission: but if thou didst pray for it conditionally, and with an (if) as *Christ* did, *if it be possible* (which instance is a strong ground for such kinde of *prayers*) and *not my will, but thy will be done* so, as thou didst referre it unto, and trust *Gods* judgement in the thing, and not thine owne, onely didst put him in minde as thy duty Cap. 9.

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duty was, of what was represented to thee as best for thee in view, and so left it to him to cast, and didst referre it to His will and wisedome: Then thy *prayer* may bee most fully answered and heard, and yet the thing denied, and thou art to interpret, and take Gods meaning and minde revealed in the event in the best sense which way soever it falls: for otherwise, CHRIST had not been heard, when yet, the Text sayes, *He was heard in all he feared*, Heb. 5.7.

In which when we are denied we are to rest in *Gods* judgment as best for us, and so interpret the prayer answered.

§ 3. There may be a reservation in the denial, for some greater mercy.

2. Observe, if there were not a *reservation* in that deniall, for some greater and further mercy, whereof

whereof that deniall was the foundation. Thus oftentimes some great crosse is prevented, by the deniall of a thing, which we were urgent for: if wee had had many of our desires, wee had been undone: So it was a mercy to *David*, that his childe was taken away, for whose life he was yet so earnest, who would have beene but a living monument of his shame. It was also a mercy to *David*, that *Absolom* was taken away, (whom surely he *prayed* much for, for he loved him much) who if he had lived, might have beene the ruine of him and his house. As a wicked mans deliverance and Cap. 9.

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and the granting his request layeth a foundation and is a reservation of him to a worse Judgement: So, the deniall of a godly mans *prayer* is for his greater good, and is laid as a foundation of a greater mercy: And againe, oftentimes the very deniall breakes a mans heart, and brings him nearer to God, puts him upon searching into his wayes and estate, and in his *prayers* to see what should be amisse therein, which alone is a great mercy, and better then the thing, seeing by the losse of the one thing hee learnes how to *pray* better, and so obtaine a hundred better

thing

things afterward. Christ desired *the Cup might passe*, it did not; and that was the foundation of our salvation, and the way to His glory: He being to passe through that suffering into His glory. The woman that had the bloody issue, though shee used many meanes, and haply *prayers* among the rest, and all in vaine, yet none tooke effect, that in the end shee might come to *Christ*, and have both body and soule healed at once. Chap. 9

§. 4. There may be a transmutation of the thing desired, into some other blessing that is better of the same kind.

3. Observe if there be not a *transmutation* and a *translation* or turning of the thing desired into some other greater blessing of the same kinde: for

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God (*all whose wayes are mercy and truth to His people*) doth improve, husband, and lay out the precious stocks of their prayers, to the best advantage, in things, whereby the greatest returnes and gains may accrue: as old *Iacob* laid not his Hand of blessing as *Ioseph* would have guided them, but laid the right hand upon the younger Sonne, whom *Ioseph* did set at his left: So often doth God take off his hand of blessing from the thing wee *prayed* for, and layes and discovers it in another more for our good: and as God giving *Isa.* the power and priviledge to blesse a sonne, though *Isa.*

Isaac hee intended it for *Esau*, yet God unbeknown to him transmitted it to *Iacob*, yet so, as the blessing was not lost: Thus is it in our *prayers* for blessings both upon our selves and others. There is often a *transmutation*, never a *frustration* of them: which may as truely and directly be called an answer to the *prayer*; As if a Factor beyond Sea, when the owner sends for such and such commodities supposing them more vendible and advantagious, but the Factor knowing the state of things, and the prices, sends him over in stead of them, such as shall sell better, Cap. 9.

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and bring in more profit, may be said to answer his letters, and that better, then if hee had sent those very commodities he writ for; Thus *Abrahams prayers* for *Ishmael* were turned for *Isaac*: *Davids* for the Child, to *Solomon*.

§. 1. God answers to the ground of our prayers.

4. Observe if in the end God doth not answer thee still according to the *ground* of thy prayer: that is, see if that holy end, intention, and affection, which thou hadst in prayer, be not in the end fully satisfied, though not in the thing thou didst desire: for God answers, *Secundum cardinem*, according to the hinge which the prayer turnes upon.

As

As when a General is sent out with an Army, by a King or a State, who give him many a particular directions, how to order and dispose, and manage the war, although in many particulars that fall out, wherein they could not foresee to give so punctuall and particular directions, he swerve from the directions, yet if he keeps to the intent of their Commission, and doth what is most advantagious for their ends, he may bee said to keepe to his Commission. For as they say of the Law, *Mens legis est lex, the minde of the Law is the Law*, not the bare words it is printed in: so

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the *Meaning of the Spirit* is the prayer, *Rom.* 8. 27. and not ſimply the things deſired, wherein wee expreſſe thoſe our deſires: and ſtill the meaning, the intent, the ground of our prayers ſhall be anſwered. To open this, the maine ends, and meanings of our hearts in our requeſts are Gods glory, the Churches good, and our owne particular comfort and happineſſe: we can deſire but comfort, and a man looketh out, and ſpieth out ſuch a particular mercie, which hee thinketh tends much to Gods glory, and his happineſſe, and yet that thing is denyed; yet notwithſtanding

God

God will anſwer him according to the meaning of his prayers, his glory ſhall certainely be advanced, even for that prayer of his, ſome other way, and his comfort made up, which is the common deſire of all mankinde: and thou canſt have but comfort, let the thing bee what it will that conveighs it to thee; and God will take order that that comfort thy ſoule deſired, thou ſhalt have come in one way or other, which when it doth, thou canſt not but ſay thy prayers are heard. For as God fulfils his promiſes, ſo hee heares prayers, there is the ſame reaſon of both: Cap. 9.

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now God hath promiſed, *Hee that leaves Father and Mother, ſhall have an hundred fold*: not *in ſpecie*, as we ſay, *in kinde*, this cannot alwayes be fulfilled, for an hundred Fathers hee cannot have. God fulfills it not therefore alwayes in the ſame kinde, but in ſome other things, which ſhall bee more than a hundred Fathers would bee.

Moſes hee *prayes* hee might goe into *Canaan*, God anſwers the ground of his *prayers*, though not in the matter in it expreſſed and deſired, and that both for *Moſes* his comfort and his owne glory; for hee takes him up to heaven

heaven, the true *Canaan*, whereof that *Canaan* was but a type, and hee appoints *Ioshua* a fresh and a young man, comming on in the world, and one whom *Moses* himselfe had tutored and brought up, and was his pupill, servant and attendant, *Num.* 6. 11, 28. and this was more for Gods glory, for *Ioshua* was therein to bee the type of Christ leading us to heaven, which the Law (of which *Moses* was the type) could not bring us unto by *reason of the weaknesse* of it; and he being young did it better: and it was not so much also for Gods glory, that one man should doe all; Cap. 10.

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and whereas *Moſes* deſired to have the honour of it, in that his ſervant that attended him, and had been brought up by him, and had all from him, that hee was the man ſhould doe it, was well-nigh as great an honour to *Moſes*, as if hee had beene the leader himſelfe. And ſo *David* when he deſired to build the Temple and an houſe to God, for the like reaſons God denyed it, but yet honoured him to prepare the materialls, and to draw the patterne, as alſo in that his Son did it, who was therein alſo the like type of Chriſt, being a *Prince of peace*, but *David* a man of blood and warre,

and

and likewise God accepted this of *David*, as if he had built it, and will recompence him as much. Cap 9.

§. 7. God when he denies, yet sometimes yeelds far in it to give satisfaction to his child.

5. Observe, if in the thing which thou hast prayed much about, though it be denyed thee, yet if God doth not endeavour to give thee (as I may so speake) all satisfaction that may be, even as if hee were tender of denying thee; and therefore doth much in it for thy prayers sake, though the conclusion proves otherwise, as being against some other purpose of his, for some other ends: as when hee denyed *Moses* to goe into the Land of *Canaan*, he did it with much

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much respect (as I may so speak with reverence) to *Moses*: he yeelded as far as might bee, for he let him leade them, till he should come to the very borders; and hee let him see that good Land, carrying him up to on hill, and (as it is thought) by a miracle inabled his sight to view the whole Land; and the man he chose to performe this worke, was his servant, which was a great honour to *Moses*; that one brought up by him should succeed him. So when *Abraham* prayed for *Ishmael*, *Oh let Ishmael live in thy sight*, *Gen.* 17. 18. God went as far in granting his request as might be;

be; for, saies hee, ver. 20. *I have heard thee, & I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitfull, and multiply him exceedingly, and hee shall beget twelve Princes; but my covenant I will establish with Isaac*, So likewise, when in casting that thing, thou didst seeke at his hands, he shews an extraordinary hand in turning it; it is a signe he had a respect to thee, that hee would vouchsafe to discover his hand so much in it; let the thing fall which way it will, if Gods hand appeare much in it, thou mayest comfortably conclude, that there is some great thing in it, and that prayer wrought that miracle Chap. 9.

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racle in it, to diſpoſe it ſo; and that there is ſome great reaſon why he denies thee, and a great reſpect had to thy prayers, in that he is pleaſed to diſcover ſo extraordinary a providence about it.

§. 7. Obſerve the effects that denyals have upon the heart. As firſt, if a man doth acknowledge God righteous in it, &c.

Laſtly, looke into the effect of that deniall upon thine own heart; as,

1. If thy heart be inlarged to acknowledge God, to bee holy and righteous in his dealings with thee, and thine owne unworthineſſe the cauſe of his denying thee. Thus wee often finde the Saints expreſſing themſelves in their prayers; that *Pſalme* 22. though typically made of Chriſt; yet as it was penned

ned by *David*, and as it may concerne his person, it may serve for an instance for this, *I cry in the day in time, but thou heareſt not*: this might have made him jealous of God; but sayes he, *Thou art holy, &c.* and dealeſt now with mee in an holy manner, and art juſt in it: *Others have called on thee*, and have been heard, though I now for my unworthineſſe am denied: *But I am a worme.* It might have put a man off, when he ſhould think others are heard, but not I, but it puts not him off, but humbles him, *I am a worme, &c.* And *Thou art holy.*

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2. If God fill thy heart with

2. If God fill the heart with a holy content-ment in the meanest.

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with an holy contentment in the denyall; if hee ſpeak to thy heart, as he did to *Moſes*, when hee denyed him, *Deut.* 3. *Let it ſuffice thee*; if as to S. *Paul*, when hee was ſo earneſt about removing that buffeting, if thou getteſt but ſuch an anſwer as that to him, *My grace is ſufficient*; or that ſome ſuch like conſideration is dropt in that ſtayes thee: It was the effect of *Davids* ſeven dayes faſting, that he did ſo contentedly beare the loſſe of the Childe, which his ſervants thought would have overwhelmed him, 2 *Sam.* 12. 19, 20, 21. But a conſideration was dropt in which was the fruit of his

prayer,

prayer, *That he should goe to him, not hee returne hither*; and his minde was comforted thereby, in so much, as it is said, *ver.* 24. *that he comforted Bathsheba also.*

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3. If thou canst bee thankfull to God, out of faith, that God hath cast and ordered all for the best, though hee hath denyed thee; and although thou seest no reason, but that the thing prayed for, would have beene for the best, yet art thankfull upon the denyall of it, out of faith resting in Gods judgement in it: as *David*, in all those forementioned places was, *Thou art holy, that inhabitest the praises*

Thirdly, if the heart be thankfull out of faith, when denyed.

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priaſes of Iſrael; he praiſes God for all this: *David* before hee did eate, after his ſeven daies faſting for the childe, aroſe, *And went firſt into the Temple and worſhipped*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 20. and of what kinde of worſhip it was, appeares by his anointing himſelfe and *changing his raymem*, which was in token of rejoycing and thankſgiving, and it fell out to him according to his faith, for preſently after, *Solomon* was begotten, *verſe*, 24.

§. 4. If the heart be not diſcouraged, for continuing ſtill to pray for other things.

4. If thou canſt pray ſtill and giveſt not over, although thou ſtandeſt for mercies which thou miſſeſt; if when thou haſt

mercies

mercies granted, thou feareſt moſt, and when denied loveſt moſt, and art not diſcouraged, thy prayers are heard, *Pſal*, 80. 4. Though God ſeemed angry with their prayers, yet they pray, and expoſtulate with him, and give not over, for they made that Pſalme as a Prayer, *And how long wilt thou be angry againſt the prayer of thy people?* So Pſal. 44. 17. *Though we are caſt among Dragons, yet wee have not beene falſe in thy Covenant.* So ſay thou, I will pray ſtill; though I never have an anſwer in this life. It moves ingenuous natures to ſee men take repulſes and denyals well, which proud Cap. 10.

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proud persons will not doe: and so it moves God.

Chap. X.

Application: *A reproofe of those that pray, but looke not after the returne of their prayers: The causes of this neglect.*

A reproofe of those that pray, but looke not after the returne of their prayers.

THe Use of all is, to reprove those, who put up prayers, and are earnest in begging, but looke not after them when they have done, no more than if they had not prayed: who still venture, and have a great stocke of prayers going,

going, but looke not after the returnes that are made, cast not up their comings in, and gainings by prayers; and when they have prayed, sit down discouraged, as not making account in earnest, that ever they shall here of their prayers againe, even as if they had been but as words cast away: *as beating the ayre*; *as bread cast upon the waters*, which they thinke sinkes, or is carried away, and they shall finde it no more: but herein you despise Gods Ordinance, and *ere*, *not knowing the power of the prayers*; and yee contempne the Lord. But you will say as they in the Prophet said, *Where-*

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in

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in doe wee contemne him? if you askt a man a queſtion, and when you had done, did turne your back upon him, as ſcoffing *Pilate* askt in ſcorne of Chriſt, *What is truth?* but would not ſtay for an anſwer, did you not contemne him? as not to anſwer when a queſtion is asked you, is contempt, ſo not to regard the anſwer made, when you have beene earneſt in begging, is no leſſe contempt alſo: if you had writ letters to a very friend about important buſineſſe, and had earneſtly ſollicited him for an anſwer, and hee were carefull in due time to ſend one, if you ſhould

make

make account to heare of him no more, ſhould you not wrong him in your thoughts? Or if hee did write, if you ſhould not vouchſafe to reade over his anſwer, were it not a contempt of him? ſo is it here, when you have been earneſt with God for bleſſings, and regard not the anſwer: and becauſe verily this is a fault among us, I will therefore endeavour to diſcover to you the cauſes and diſcouragements, which though they keepe you not from praying, yet from this earneſt expectation, and reall, and true making account to heare of anſwers of your prayers; onely my ſcope is, not to

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The cauſes of this neglect, are of two ſorts.

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to shew you so much the reasons, why God denies you many requests, as why even in your owne hearts you are discouraged after you have prayed, as if they would not bee answered, although God doth answer them. These discouragements are partly *temptations*, partly *sinfull impediments* wherein wee are more faulty.

1 Temptations, want of assurãce; as 1 That because your persons are not accepted your prayers are not.

1. Because your assurance that your persons are accepted, is weake, therefore your confidence that your prayers are heard, is weake also: For as God doth first accept the person, and then our prayers: so the beleefe, that

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that God doth accept our persons is that which also upholds our hearts in confidence that our prayers shall be granted; this you may finde in 1 *Iohn* 5. 13, 14, 15. in the 13. *vers.* he sayes, *These things have I written to you, that ye may know you have eternall life:* and upon that assurance this will follow, *Verse* 14, 15. *And this is the confidence that wee have in him, that if we aske any thing according to his will, he heares us, &c. And if we know he heares us, we know we have the petitions wee desired of him.* Marke how he links these three together, as effects and consequences each of other. 1. *These*

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things I write unto you, that you may be assured, that life and heaven is yours, as in 12. and 13. *verses*. And upon that 2. this confidence will follow in your hearts, *That God heares you*, that is, that you have his eares open to you, and his heart enlarged towards you: and then 3. if you be assured that God heares you, then from this will follow an assurance, that *You shall have any thing granted*, you desire; yea, and hee makes this one of the maine and immediate effects of Assurance of justification; therefore he sayes, *This is the confidence* that we have in him; that is, this effect there is of this confidence,

for

for whereas they might say, what benefit will accrue to us by this assurance? why this sayes he, which is one of the great and main priviledges of a Christian, even assurance that God will heare him; and not onely so, but grant him all his prayers. For when a man is assured God hath given him his Son, he will then easily be induced to beleeve and expect, *How shall he not with him give me all things?* Rom. 8 32. If once he looks upon God as a Father, hee will then easily conceive that which Christ sayes, *If Fathers that are evill can give good things to their Children, how much more* Cap. 10.

shall not your Father give his Spirit, and all good things to them that aske them? and if he gave his Sonne, when wee did not pray to him, how much more shall hee not with him gives us all things we pray for? if a man comes to sue to any man whose mind he knew not, whether hee loved him or not, he would have small hope or expectation of having his suite granted, though hee came againe and againe; but if he be assured he is in favour with him, according to that degree of favour hee supposeth himself to stand in with him, hee is assured and confident of obtaining his request.

2. Dis-

2. Discouragement is the weakneſſe of their prayers: though a man thinks his perſon is accepted, yet alas ſayes he, my prayers are ſo poore and weake as ſurely God will never regard them. To remove which, let mee firſt aske thee this queſtion: Doeſt thou pray with all thy might? then though *that thy might* be weake in it ſelfe, and in thine owne apprehenſion ſuch, yet becauſe it is all the might which thou haſt, and which grace hath in thee, it ſhall be accepted. *For God accepts according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* 2 Cor. 8. 12.

Cad 10. 2 Of the weakneſſe of our prayers: which is anſwered by 3. things.

1.

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2. Thou art to consider that God doth not heare thee for thy prayers sake, though not without them, but *for his Names sake*, and his *Sons sake*, and because thou art his child, as the mother when her child cryes (suppose it be a weake childe) doth not neglect to heare and relieve it, but tenders it; not because it doth cry more lowd, but because it cries; and pities it the more the weaker it is.

3. Againe, though the performance in it selfe be weake, yet considered as a prayer, it may be strong, because a weake prayer may set the strong God a worke; as faith for the act of

of it, as produced by us may be weak, yet becauſe its object is Chriſt, therefore it juſtifies: So it is in prayer, it prevailes, not becauſe of the performance it ſelfe, but becauſe of the name, which it is put up in, even Chriſts name; and therefore as a weake faith juſtifies, ſo a weake prayer prevailes as well as a ſtronger; and both for the like reaſon in both, for faith attributes all to God, and ſo doth prayer; for as faith is meerly a receiving grace, ſo prayer a begging grace. And therefore doeſt thou think thy prayers are accepted at all, notwithſtanding their weakneſſe? if Cap. 10.

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that they are accepted, then they muſt be accepted as prayers; now if they be accepted as prayers, then as effectuall motives to prevaile with God to grant the thing you aske; for if hee ſhould not accept them to that end, for which they were ordained, it is as if he accepted them not at all. As therefore when he approves of any mans faith as true and ſincere, hee approves and accepts of it to that purpoſe, for which it was ordained, which is to ſave and juſtifie, and to this end doth as fully accept the weakeſt act of faith, as the ſtrongeſt; ſo is it with their prayers, which being

being ordained as a means to obtaine mercies from him, if hee accepts them at all, it is with relation to the accompliſhment of them, which is their end. Cap. 10.

4. Men are miſtaken in judging of the weakneſſe of their prayers, they judge of the weakneſſe of their prayers by their expreſſions, and gifts in performing them, or by the ſtirring and overflow of affections, whereas the ſtrength and vigor of prayer ſhould bee eſtimated from the faith, the ſincerity, the obedience, the deſires expreſt in it. As it is not the lowdneſſe of a Preachers voice, but the

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weight and holineſſe of the matter, and ſpirit of the Preacher, that moves a wiſe, and an intelligent hearer: ſo not gifts, but graces in prayers are they that move the Lord. The ſtrength of prayer lies not in words, but in that it is fitted to prevaile with God; one prayer is not more ſtrong than another, further than it is ſo framed as it hath power with God more or leſſe; as of *Iacob* it is ſaid, *he had power with God*, *Hoſ.* 12. Now prayers move God, not as an Oratour moves his hearers, but as a childe moves his father: two words of a childe humbled, and crying at his fathers

thers feet, will prevaile more than penned orations. *Rom.* 8. It is *the meaning of the Spirit*, that God lookes unto, more than the expressions: for the *groans* there are said to be *unutterable*. *Hezekiahs* expressions were so rude and broken, that he saies, *Esay*, 38. 14. that he did but *chatter*, (hee being then sick,) even *as a crane*, yet God heard them. Cap. 10.

A third discouragement is failings of answers; I have prayed often and long, and I have beene seldome or never answered, and therefore I make little account of my prayers, that they are heard: others have the revenewes of

3 So often failings of answers: answered by foure things.

Cap. 10. of their prayers comming in, but I doe misse whatsoeuer almost I stand for. Therefore say they as those, *Why haue we fasted, and thou regardest it not? Esay* 58. 3.

1. To remove this, consider, 1. That thou hast the more reason to wait, for thou hast the more answers to come: for as wicked men *treasures up wrath*, so doe godly men mercy, and especially by their praiers; and therefore mercies, and answers doe often come thick together, even as afflictions also doe.

2. Suppose thou shouldst have few answers concerning the things thou seekest for here, either in praying

praying for thy ſelf or others, yet *yet thy reward is with the Lord.* It is in praying as in preaching, a man may preach faithfully many a yeere, and yet not convert a ſoule, and yet a man is not to give over waiting, but to obſerve after every Sermon what good is done, and whether God will give them repentance, as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. And if none be converted, yet as *Eſay* 49. 4. *A mans reward is with the Lord, Every man ſhall receive his owne reward according to his own labour,* 1 *Cor.* 3. 8. and not according to the ſucceſſe of his labour onely. So it is in praying, though thou miſſeſt a- Cap. 10.

gaine

Cap. 10. gain and again, and nothing ſucceeds thou prayeſt for, yet be not diſcouraged, for thy reward is with the Lord, which will come in one day.

3. 3 GOD doth it, not that hee heares thee not, but to try thee: for a man to ſay as *David* ſayes, *Pſal.* 116. 1, 2. *God hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live*, that is nothing ſo much as to be able to ſay, Well, I have prayed thus long, and for theſe many things, and never ſped, and *yet I will call upon him whilſt I live*, though I find no anſwer in this life. To finde commings in, in a trade, and yet to hold out

trading

trading ſtill, argues not ſo much faithfulneſſe in a mans calling, as when a man hath loſſes and caſtings behind hand, and yet to follow it. Cap. 10.

4. God uſually ſtayes ſo long that we have done expecting, *Luke* 18. 8. *The Elect cry day and night*, but *God ſtayes ſo long, ver.* 7. that when he comes *hee finds not faith*, they have done expecting, have forgot their prayers, and then *he doth things, they looked not for*. 4. Eſay 64.

Other diſcouragements there are wherein we our ſelves are more faulty, and which are our ſinnes, more than our temptations, which yet weaken the expecta- §. 2. A cauſe, are ſinfull

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pectation of having our prayers answered: as,

1. Slothfulnesse in prayer.

1. Slothfulnesse in prayer, when wee doe not put to all our might in praying, and then no wonder, we doe not onely not obtaine, but that our owne hearts misgive us, that we look for little successe and issue of such prayers, *Qui frigide rogat, docet negare*; he that shews himself cold in a suite, teaches him he sues to, to deny him; if wee see one seeking to us faintly, and slightly, wee are not then sollicitous to deny him, but thinke he will bee easily put off, and not thinke much; so accordingly when wee shall observe so much by our

selves,

selves, and see our selves slothfull in praying, and praying *as if we prayed not*, no wonder if by reason of that consciousnesse, wee looke not after the successe of such prayers, which in the performance wee slighted; when wee pray, as if wee were willing to be denyed, wee knowing that the Scripture sayes, that *the fervent prayer* onely *prevailes*, that prayer which is ἐνεργουμένη, that sets all the faculties on worke, *Iames* 5. 16. How should wee then expect that God should grant any good thing to us? For though God sels nothing to us for our prayers, but gives freely, yet Cap. 10.

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yet hee would have his gifts accepted: now without large desires, and longings they would not bee accepted: and what is fervent prayer, but the expression of such fervent desires? *Iacob wrestled* when hee obtained; *many seeke to enter*, sayes Christ, *but you must strive*. Now when wee know these things, and yet are slothfull, how can wee expect any answers at all? will not the consciousnesse of it quell all our expectations? and hence it comes to passe that God proportioning his dealings with us to our prayers, because we seeme to pray, and yet pray not to purpose, there-

therefore God he some-
times seemes like one a-
sleepe, and then some-
times to wake, and make
faire offers to help, and
yet falles as it were asleepe
againe, because we were
thus drowsie in our pray-
ers; those prayers that a-
waken God, must awa-
ken us: Those prayers
that stir God, must first
stirre us to lay hold on God
as *Isaiah* speakes: as obe-
dience strengthens *faith*
and assurance, so ferven-
cy in prayer begets confi-
dence of being heard. In
all other things slothful-
nesse doth discourage and
weaken expectation: doth
any man expect that rich-
es should come upon him,
when

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when hee doth his busineſſe negligently? *for it is the diligent hand that maketh rich*: doth any man expect a crop and a harveſt, if he takes not paines to plow, and ſow his corn? no more if you doe not take pains with your hearts in Prayer, can you expect an anſwer, or indeed will you.

2 Diſcouragement: looking at prayer as a duty, rather then as a means to obtain bleſſings.

2. Cauſe: or ſinfull diſcouragement herein: is looking at *prayer* onely as a duty tō be performed, and ſo performing it as a taske, and not ſo much out of deſires ſtirred up after the things to be obtained, nor out of faith that we ſhall obtain them; which is as if a Phyſitian having

having a ſick ſervant, to whom he preſcribeth, and commandeth to take ſome phyſicke to cure him, and his man ſhould take it indeed becauſe it is commanded and preſcribed by his maſter, looking at it as an act of duty as he obeyes him in other buſineſſes, but not as looking at it as a medicine, or meanes, that will have any worke upon him to cure him, and therefore orders himſelfe as if hee had taken no ſuch thing. Thus doe moſt in the world *pray* to God, take *prayer* as a *preſcription* onely, but not as a *meanes*: they come to God daily, but as to a *Maſter* onely in this Cap. 19.

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this performance, not as to a *Father*, and thus doing, no wonder if they looke for little effect of *prayers*: for our expectation never exceedes or reaches further than our end and intention, which we had in any busineſſe. If I perform any Ordinance but as a duty, then I reſt therein, and expect no further: as if a man preacheth for *filthy lucre* onely, he performes his duty, and then lookes for his hire, but lookes not after any other effect of his Sermons: ſo nor will men doe after their *prayers* for anſwers to them when they performe them as duties onely. Now to help

help you in this, you are to looke to two things in *prayer*. First to a *command from God*. Secondly, to the *promises of God*: and so to consider it in a double relation, first as a *duty*, in respect to the *command*, secondly as a *meanes* to obtaine or procure blessings at Gods hand in relation to his *promises*: therefore in *prayer*, first *an act of obedience*, secondly an act of *faith* is to bee exercised, *aske in faith nothing wavering*, *Iam.* 1. Now the most in the world performe it as an act of obedience onely, and so rest in the present performance and acceptation of it, but if a man *pray* in *faith*, hee will

Cap. 10.

A directiō. 2 Things to be lookt at it praying A command A promise.

pray

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pray with an eye to the promises; and looke on *prayer* as a meanes for time to come to obtaine such or such a mercy at Gods hands; and if so, then he is not satisfied till hee hath an answer of his *prayers*, and till then will waite, as the *Church* sayes, *Shee would wait till he did arise and plead her cause.*

3. Discouragement; falling into sinnes again after praying.

A third sinfull discouragement is returning to sinnes after *prayers*, which a man hath prayed for some mercy, and riseth full of much confidence that his *prayers* are heard, and so a while hee walkes, yet falling into a sinne, that sin doth dash all his hopes, undoes his *prayers* (as he thinkes)

thinkes) and calls them backe againe, meets as it were with the answer, which is Gods messenger, and causeth it to returne to heaven againe. How often when God had even granted a petition, and the Decree was a comming forth, and the grant newly written, and the seale a setting to it, but an act of Treason comming betweene, stops it in the seale, and deferres it, blots and blurreth all, both prayer and grant when newly written, and leaves a guilt in the minde, which quells our hopes, and then wee looke no more after our *prayers*; and this especially if when wee Cap. 10.

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were a ſinning, ſuch a thought came in, (as often it doth to reſtraine us) are you not in dependance upon God for ſuch a mercy, aud have prayed for it, and are faire for it, how then dare you doe this, and ſinne againſt him? when in this caſe the heart goes on, this blots all the *prayer*, and diſcourageth a man; for ſaith the conſcence, will God hear *ſinners?* (as he ſaid.) And thus farre it is true that *ſinning* thus betweene, interrupts and hinders the obtaining our petitions, that anſwerably as wee doe thus daſh and betray and undoe our *prayers*, ſo in a proportion, we finde

The anſwer of it.

in

Cap. 10.

in the way to our obtaining the thing wee *prayed* for, so many rubbes and difficulties doe arise; for as wee lay blocks in Gods way comming towards us to doe us good, so hee in ours: therefore often when a businesse goes prosperously on, and wee thinke wee shall carry it, comes some accident betweene the cup and the lip, that casts all behinde hand againe, because answerably wee dealt with God. For when wee had *prayed*, and were encouraged and in good hopes, then by some *sinne* or other wee spoiled all, and bereaved our selves of our expection. But yet this

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you are to consider, that as in the end *praying* useth to overcome *sinne* in Gods Children, so also God in the end overcomes difficulties, and brings the matter to passe: and know it is not *sinnes* past so much that hinder the prayers of Gods people, as the present unfitnesse and indisposition of their hearts for mercy.

TIDINGS

TIDINGS OF PEACE, TO BE SPOKEN TO Consciences distressed.

Psal. 85. vers. 8.

——— *God will speak peace unto his people, and to his Saints, &c.* ———

THe maine thing intended to be insisted upon out of these words is dispatcht, yet that I may not leave so fair and fruitfull a crop still standing upon the ground unreaped, I will goe on more briefly to have in the rest of that Harvest

the Text affords.

This *Psalm* (as was said) was penned as a Prophecy of and *prayer* for the returne of Gods people out of the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the setling and establishment of that Church and State upon its former Basis, yet so as therein there is a further and more especiall aime had to the peace and glory to bee brought in by Christ, till when this Prophecy otherwise had but a poore and slender accomplishment, in regard of much outward glory or peace that that Church enjoyed.

And therefore the peace here spoken of and promised

promiſed for the preſent is to be extended largelier than to outwarp proſperity, or an happy iſſue out of that calamity, even to ſpeaking peace to drooping and weather beaten conſciences: and accordingly wee finde this kinde of peace to have beene ſpecially promiſed by the Prophet *Iſaiah* to the people at their returne out of the Captivity, both in *Iſaiah* 48. from 20. to the end, and *Iſaiah* the 57. from the 14. to the end, there being many broken hearts that had wanted the light of Gods countenance long, having beene during the Captivity, baniſht from the Ordinan-

ces of the Temple, hanging up their *harps* mourning, whose *thoughts* were as if God had meant to *destroy them*, as appeares *Ier.* 29.11. who afterwards were refreshed with inward *peace*, at the restauration of those Ordinances, as well as with outward, as by those places doth appeare. Therefore in relation to this kinde of peace onely I will at this time handle the words.

In the words you have a discovery of Gods proceedings in treating of peace, or proclaiming war with his people and subjects.

Obser. 1 1. You see *that sometimes*

times God doth not ſpeake peace to his owne children. This was their ſtate for the preſent, when this *Pſalme* was penned: *Hee will ſpeake peace,* therefore at preſent he did not; yea, it may incline us to thinke that God at preſent ſpake the contrary, for the Prophet ſpeakes this by *faith,* as contrary to ſenſe, and preſent experience; hee beleeves God intends to come againe to a treaty of peace, though now hee ſeemes to have nothing but anger, and blood, and war in his looks, ſpeeches, and actions; and to threaten and proclaime warre, and take up Armes againſt them. And thus God often

ten deales with his owne Children, whether a people or a particuler man: ſo with a nation, *Eſay* 63. 10. *They rebelled, and he fought againſt them*: ſo with a particular man, God frowned upon and rated his Childe *Ephraim, and ſpeake bitter things againſt him*, (it is the phraſe uſed, *Ier.* (31.20.) though yet *Ephraim is my pleaſant Child*, ſayes he: *David* had not a good word from him a long time, *Pſal.* 51.8. *Make me to heare againe of joy and gladneſſe.* And *Pſal.* 50. 7. *Heare oh my people, and I will ſpeake*, but not againſt them they might hope, becauſe hee ownes them for his people:

ple: *Heare oh Israel, and I will testifie against thee*: and yet it followes, *I am the Lord thy God*. *Iob* sayes, he did not speake onely against him, but also *wrote bitter things*, hee wrote as it were bookes against him, *Iob* 13.26. hee writing over in his Conscience *the sinnes of his youth* in letters of blood, and wrath, and terrors for them.

There must needs bee some great reason for this, *they being his people*, which is the second thing that is intimated, and may be observed out of these words, namely, the reason or moving cause provoking God thus to interrupt *Obser.* 2.

rupt the peace of his people: they had fallen into some grosse *folly* or other, some sinfull inordinate dispositions had beene indulged unto, and nourished in them, which is usually, though not alwayes, the cause of this his dealing: this is evident by this, that the conclusion of their peace, when it is made up againe, hath this clause, as the onely article of reconciliation between them, that *they returne no more to folly*, implying they had formerly runne out into some inordinacy, which to reduce them from, God had tooke up armes against them, and thereby taught them wisedome

dome to take heed of losing, and then buying peace at so deare a rate againe. And indeed all the quarrells, that God hath against a Nation, a particular place, or parson, that belongs to him, doe begin there; *They rebelled*, and Hee *fought against them*, Esay 63. 8. *For the iniquity of his covetousnesse I was wroth*, Isai 57.

The reason is, for anger is out of love as well as hatred, which therefore he expresseth though with griefe, hee should bee put to quarrell with those, hee hath set himselfe to love. And as wicked men, whom hee alwayes hates, may out of his patience have

Reason.

have a truce; so on the contrary, with his owne, God may take up a quarrell, yet He loves them, and remembers them, with everlasting kindnesse.

The *Vses* of both are these,

Vse 1. 1. As peace with God is deare to you, so to take heed of turning unto folly, Onely take this advertisement, that they are not meere follies or ignorances that doe interrupt, or breake the peace: as it is not simply the outrage of some Pirats that will cause two States at peace to enter into a warre, unlesse that State consent to their act, and maintaine them in their rapine. So it

is

is not simply the rising of lusts that *warre in our members against the law of the minde*, that breake the peace betweene God and us, unlesse they be approved of, and consented unto, nourished and maintained with some presumption; whilest wee maintaine, and take up a constant fight against Gods enemies in us, and disavow the outragious risings of our lusts, the peace may hold, and often doth; for whilest wee are not at peace with sinne, God may be at peace with us and our spirits; but so much peace as wee give them, so much war God takes up.

The

Vse 2. The second *Vse* is: Doth God take up quarrells against His owne? then upon any breach made, goe forth to meet Him: It is Saint *Pauls* exhortation, not *to let the Sunne goe downe upon thy wrath*, but to reconcile thy selfe ere night, with thy offended brother; but I turne the exhortation, *Let not the Sunne goe downe upon Gods wrath* towards thee; but every day make and renew thy peace with God, ere thou sleepest, that as *David* sayes, *thou mayst lie down and sleepe in peace*, *Psal.*4.8.

Vse 3. The third *Vse:* If the peace of Gods owne people bee thus often interrupted

rupted, who yet are *the sons of peace*, *Luke* 10. what wrath is reserved for the *children of disobedience*, and open Rebells? that are *children of wrath*, because *of disobedience*. *There is no peace to the wicked, saies my God*, Esay 57. God is *a preparing against thee*, who ever thou art, that goest on in *sinne*, *if thou turne not*, Psal. 7. 13. thou art prest for hell, and art thither bound, to encounter with the wrath of the great God, thither where no truce is to bee had, *there is no discharge in that warre*, as *Solomon* sayes, *Eccles.* 8. 8. Thinke of this, you that *sinne*, and will *sinne*; whose peace is not struck

Ephes. 2. 2.

ſtruck up betweene God and you, who never yet ſo much as entred into any treaty of peace with God, who never apprehended God and your ſelves at oddes.

obſer.3. The third thing to bee obſerved out of the Text is this; *That when the Child of God wants peace, he can have no peace till God ſpeake it*; God muſt ſpeak peace, if ever his people have it: therefore ſayes hee here, *I will heare what God will ſpeake:* he ſpeaks in oppoſition to the voice of man, and the helpe of ſecond cauſes, and of all meanes whatever, which in time of diſtreſſe, of themſelves can doe no good.

Rea-

Reason first: Because *God* is the *King of all* the world, the Soveraigne Lord of all. Now treaties of warre and peace are the prerogative of Kings, and of them alone: they may consult with their subjects about establishing good Lawes, as they use to doe, &c. but the proclaming Warre and Peace with forregine States, they have ever held in their owne hands; and so doth God who is the King of Kings. *Reas.* 1.

Secondly, because God is the Judge of all the world and the party offended, at whose suite all arrests and controversies doe come; now when a con- *Reas.* 2.

condemned man ſtands at the barre, let all the ſtanders by ſay what they will, bid him bee of good comfort, and tell him that his cauſe will goe well, yet till hee heare the Judge himſelfe ſpeake as much, hee cannot bee at reſt in his minde: the Judge onely can acquit him and abſolve him. The King alone ſpeakes pardons; and ſo doth God peace; all afflictions are his arreſts; thou muſt therefore make thy peace with him, if thou wilt be at peace.

Reaſ. 3. Thirdly, peace eſpecially of conſcience, is a thing muſt bee *created*, for our hearts of themſelves are full of nothing but tur-

moile;

moile; as the *raging Sea, which cannot rest. I create the fruites of the lips, peace, Isaiah* 57. 19. men may speake it, but I must create it; A word of power, such as went forth when light was created, must goe forth from God, or else there is no peace: for otherwise our hearts are as the sea, that rests not.

Fourthly, the wounds of conscience which are in Gods people, are of that quality, that none but God can cure them; for, the chiefe thing that wounds them, is the losse of *Gods* favour, not simply his wrath: for it is the glory of God, and his favour, *Reas.* 4.

vour, not selfe-love onely that makes them seeke him; therefore nothing gives peace, but the restoring of his favour, and the light of his countenance, the same dart that wounded, must heale againe; *Isay* 57. *I smote him, and I will heale him*; And as one that is sick with love, when love is the disease, no physick, no perswasion of friends can cure it, nothing but onely the love of the party beloved; so when a soule is wounded for the losse of Gods love, not all the things in the world can cure the heart but one word from him, one good looke, one promise from him that we

are

are his, ſtills all, and onely can give peace. Like to a poore childe, that cries for its mother, let who will dandle it, and play with it, and uſe it never ſo kindely, yet it will not bee ſtilled till the mother comes; ſo it is with a poore ſoule that cryes after God day and night.

1. *Vſe.* In caſe thou art in diſtreſſe, eſpecially of ſpirit, and want of peace of Conſcience, waite upon God, in the uſe of meanes for peace; friends may come to thee, and ſay, Why ſhouldeſt thou be troubled? thou haſt no ſuch cauſe to bee caſt downe; but all theſe are *miſerable comforters*, (as *Vſe* 1.

Iob

Iob said) unlesse God speake peace: *David* heard by the Prophet *Nathan* that his sinne was pardoned, but yet his soule was not at quiet, till God would second it immediately by his Spirit; therefore saies he when *Nathan* had been with him, *Psal.* 51. 8. *Make mee to heare of joy and gladnesse.* Art thou baited with hellish blasphemies cast into thy soule? God must speake peace, and rebuke Satan for thee, and take him off thee; all thy friends, all the men in the world cannot doe it; they can onely say as the Archangel said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* And hee can as easily doe it, as hee did rebuke

ake *Laban*, and forbade
m ſpeaking roughly to
b, the ſame charge he
n give in an inſtant to
an: therefore wait up-
n God, and looke up to
im.

2 Conſider this againſt *Vſe 2.*
e time you come to die;
l your deſire is to die in
ce, and, *Oh let thy ſer-*
nt depart in peace! is the
ech and deſire of all:
who is it, that muſt
ake peace to you then?
d onely. At death you
ll ſend for a good Mi-
er, or a good friend,
ive you ſome comfort,
you call it) but, if God
ll not ſpeake it, how
they? If you could
ll all the Angells out of

Heaven, and all the Sain
both in Earth, and He
ven; and so could have
that whole Colledge
Physicians about you, a
they should desire
comfort you with all th
cordials; yet if God w
not speake it, who is ab
to doe it? *Iob* 34. 29. *If*
hides his face, who can be
him? None can shew hi
face, as the opposition
the next words shew
False daubers may co
to you, and say, *Peace,*
as they in the Prop
said; but listen what
will speake, he onely
and can doe it; and be
you make sure of him
fore you come to
Would any wise Pri
defen

...ferre the treaty of peace ...ith his enemy, till hee ...me into the field, and ...hen the battell is begun? ...w fooliſh then are thoſe, ...ho neglect ſeeking after ...OD, till the aſſault of ...eath, comes, and the *King* ...*feares* with all his ter- ...rs, hath encompaſſed ...em round?

4. *Obſervation* is, that Gods people bee in ne- ...ſo great diſtreſſe, yet ...*an eaſie thing for God to* ...*peace* to them; marke ... expreſſion uſed here, ...s but *ſpeaking peace*, that ... it is as *eaſie* for him to ...e peace, as it is for you ...*ſpeake a word*; it is no ...re to him: Then, our ...mfort is, that as he one- *Obſer.* 4.

ly must doe it; so he eas-
ly can doe it, even with a
word.

Reas 1. *Reason* 1. Because his
speaking is *creating*: if he
speaks, he makes things to
bee, even with a word; as
at first, he did but say, *Let
there be light, and there was
light*; so still, if he but say,
Let there be peace, there is
peace: *he made all, and he
holds all by the word of his
power*. As therefore when
the storme was as in
heigh, and the waves
most raging, yet at one
word of *Christs*, they were
all still: *The Sea and the
winds obey him*: so when
tentations are most fierce,
and the doubts of the
owne heart most tumul-
tuous

nous, and raging, a word from him, can ſtill them.

Secondly, becauſe the light, which God gives to mans ſpirit, when hee ſpeakes peace, is a ſure and infallible light, and therefore a ſatisfying light; ſo is when it comes, it muſt needs give peace; and no objection, no tentation can darken or obſcure it, when it ſhines: *If he give quietneſſe, who can trouble?* ſayes he in *Iob* 34.29. No creature is able to ſeparate from his love, or the aſſurance of it.

It is a certaine and infallible light, which God gives, when hee ſpeakes peace: The *anointing from above*, which enlighteneth

a mans eyes, *is truth, and is no lie*, 1 *Ioh.* 2. 27. that is in *teaching a man* (of which he there ſpeakes, not onely what hee is in himſelfe, but what hee is in teaching us) hee doth it ſo, as a man is not deluded by it, and therefore it is added, *None elſe need teach* him; for did the Spirit (when he did ſpeak peace) ſpeak ſo, as that that man to whom it is ſpoken, did not infallibly apprehend it, hee ſhould ſpeake in vaine: for ſo the Apoſtle reaſons in caſe of *unknown tongues*, that if a *Trumpet* give *an uncertaine ſound*; or a man ſpeakes ſo, as it ſhall not bee knowne what he ſpeakes; *hee beats the aire*:

ure: 1 Cor. 14. 9. Now therefore surely GOD, when hee speakes peace, speakes it so infallibly, and distinctly, that the soule knowes the meaning of it; It is not a voice else; for, sayes the Apostle there, *ver.* 10. The *end of all voyces is to signifie*, and therefore if I *know not the meaning of the voice, hee shall bee as a Barbarian, that speakes to me*: *ver.* 11. especially when the speaker undertakes to bee a *witnesse*, as the Holy Ghost in speaking peace is, 1 *John* 5. 6. Now to *witnesse*, is such a testimony, as is taken for infallible, for the end of it is to put an *end to the controversie*, and it

ends the ſtrife betweene man and man; now the Holy Ghoſt when he ſpeakes, ſpeakes as a *meſſe*; and therefore puts an end to a mans doubts: he ſpeaks infallibly.

And therefore in the ſecond place, it is a ſatisfying light alſo; it is ſuch a light, and diſpells darkneſſe, and anſwers all objections; and ſo ſpeakes peace home. As in a queſtion, and Controverſie in Divinity, or Logicke when ſome one bottome truth is underſtood, a man hath a light, which goes through all the Objections, and anſwers them all; ſuch a light doth the Spirit give to a poore diſtreſſed

troubled soule, about the great controversie of his owne salvation, when hee doth speake peace; hee gives such a light, as satisfies the minde, as lets him see that in Gods free grace, and in Christ, which doth answer to all, yea, or all the devils can lay against him, from what wants, or objections are in himselfe. *Hee openeth, and no man, nor devill, is able to shut.* And therefore when hee doth speake peace, his testimony is taken and beleeved: If wee receive *the witnesse of men, we* rest in it: 1 *John* 5. 9. *the witnesse of God is greater*, that is, of more power, and efficacy to per-

swade, and satisfie the
soule.

Vse 1. 1. *Vse*, is an Vse of
comfort to poore soules
that are in distresse, and
in such distresse some-
time, as they thinke, and
say their cause is desperate,
and past recovery, so farre
are their soules sometimes
shot into despaire. Con-
sider, how easie it is for
you to haue your condi-
on altered, and changed
even in a moment. I tell
thee, though (it may bee)
thou hast been cast downe
this twenty yeeres, and
thy soule is battered, bro-
ken, hardened, setled, fix-
ed in serious thoughts of
thy ruine, and reproba-
on, yet one good looke,

one good word from God shall in an instant dispell all, after thy conceit and apprehension cleane: God can and doth often more with one word, in one moment, than Satan could doe in many years, with all the objections he could muster up. The truth of this, in experience wee often finde and observe in our selves and others. Yea, and sometimes when hee doth speake peace, hee gives such satisfaction to a mans soule in that particular, that he would bee content to bee as many years more, in his spirituall conflicts, to enjoy but the like light, one halfe houre. Thus easie

is

is it, for God to speak peace. Though thou thinkest thy selfe never so *farre off from peace*, yet hee can speake peace to them, that *are afarre off, as well as those who are neere*, as himselfe sayes, *Isaiah* 57. 19. for, sayes he, it is *I* that speake it. And when hee doth it, then all thy doubts and distresses, will be forgotten, as the paines of a woman in travaile are when a Man childe is borne.

Vse 2. Secondly is the Church in any distresse? (as the Church here at this time was) hee can redeeme it out of all with a word. A word spoken to *Cyrus* his heart, did set them in

their

eir own land again, you have it expreſſed, ſay. 44. 26, 27, 28. *The that ſaith to Ieruſalem, ſhalt be inhabited, and the Cities of Iudah, yee ſhall be built*; you ſee his manner of doing it, it is but with a word ſpeaking; *hee ſayes to Ieruſalem, bee built*; and though there be never ſo great impediments in the way, he will *ſay to the ſea, be dry*, that his people may paſſe over; hee dryed up a whole Nation, a ſea of people, namely the Babylonians, to make way for this deliverance. And when they are conquered, and *Cyrus*, a new King comes to have the ſway of things, God ſpeakes to his

his heart also; *That saith of Cyrus; he is my shepheard*, and causeth him to say to Jerusalem, Be thou built. Therefore goe to him, and trust in him in all the distresses of the Church, as the Church also did, *Psalm.* 44. 4. *Thou art my King, command deliverances*; A *Mandamus* from God doth it, and will doe it at any time.

Let God bee never so angry, and his peoples distresse never so great, *yet he will speake peace in the end* to his people: you heard before, that if wee have peace, he onely must give it; and then, that hee could, and was able with ease to doe it: and now you

you shall heare, that hee will certainely doe it in the end.

The *Reasons* the Text suggests are these:

1. If wee consider but, who this God is, that is to speake peace, *I will heare what GOD the Lord will speake*; hee is *the Lord*, and therefore able to speak what pleaseth him; hee is peculiarly *the God of peace*, and therefore willing to speake peace. Now, 1. when it is said, hee is the *God of peace, and the God of comfort*, the meaning is, hee is full of it, infinitely full of it; and out *of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speakes*; thoughts of peace, and love to his doe

Reas. 1.

doe boile within him, as hatred, or malice doth in a malicious man towards his enemy; so as hee cannot containe and forbeare expressing it towards him, that as *David* sayes, his *thoughts did burne within him*, and at last, *breake forth*, so in God; *I know the thoughts I thinke towards you* (sayes hee to them of the captivity) *Ier.* 29. 11. *They are thoughts of peace, and not of evill.* And besides that these his thoughts of peace are taken up of himselfe, his Sonne also hath bespoken peace for us; and therefore God will speake it. Even as *Ioseph*, though he speake roughly a while to

brethren, yet could
in the end containe,
45.1. so nor God.
Secondly, Let us con-
, who they are to
om hee is to speake it,
are his people, as the
ext hath it; and to them
re is no question, but
will speake peace;
ough hee seemes angry
a while. They are his
ople, that is the reason
n 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *Hee*
not cast off his people:
also *Esa.* 63.8, 9. *When*
rebelled, hee was wroth,
hee said, Surely, they are
people, so was I their Sa-
. They? why they
the *sonnes of peace,*
13. 6. ordained for
te, and therefore shall
be

Reas. 2.

bee ſure to have it; and although ſome differences may ariſe betwixt God and them, yet there is a naturall συγ in the Lord that moves him to ſpeake peace in the end to them: as the dumbe ſonne of *Cræſus*, when hee ſaw his father like to bee killed, though hee had never ſpake before, yet then out of an *impetus* of ſpirit, the ſtrings of his tongue were unlooſed, and hee cried out to the murtherer, *Kill not King Cræſus*; ſo, when the enemies of his Church are ready to devour his people, and *Satan* is ready to ſwallow his child up in deſpaire, then God bowells worke with him

him, and hee can hold no
longer, but cries, *Save my*
child, save my Church. Is
Ephraim my pleasant child,
(saves God) *Ier.* 31. 20?
Well saves *God, though I*
take against him, and took
him up, and chid him
roundly, *yet I cannot forget*
my child saves he, nor my
fatherly affection to *him,*
for my bowels are stirred,
and I will surely have mercy
on him.

Thirdly, otherwise if *Reas.* 3.
God did not in the end
make peace, they would
indeed *returne to follie,*
which is the third thing
in the text. For his end of
making peace, is that
they might not returne to
folly, *Psal.* 125. 3. *The rod*
of

of the wicked shall not [illegible]
wayes lie upon the righteous
leſt they put forth the
hand to iniquity. Therefo
at the laſt verſe, *Peace ſh*
bee upon Iſrael. As for th
cauſe hee ſpeaks outwa
peace, ſo alſo inward, a
ſuffers not the rod of S
tan, and of his owne he
vie diſpleaſure to lie u
on their hearts: for el
they would returne
the pleaſures of ſinne; ſo
every creature muſt ha
ſome delight; their ſp
rits would faile, and
tired out elſe, and wear
in good duties, if GO
ſhould not in the
ſpeake peace, *Eſay*
The ſpirit would faile
fore me. When the chil
ſwounds

ounds in the whipping,
od lets fall the rod, and
s a kissing it, to fetch
into it again. As tis a
in Physicke, still to
intaine nature: and
refore when that shall
in hazzard to bee de-
oyed, they leave giving
ging Physicke, and
cordialls: so doth
OD with his people;
ough with purging Phy-
ke, hee often brings
spirits very weake,
low, yet hee will up-
and maintaine their
its, so as they shall not
e, and bee extinguisht,
then hee will give cor-
lls to raise them up
ine.

Sect. 3. What good heart that

that beares a child-like affection to God, would offend such a God, that bee thy distresses what they will bee, will certainely speake, peace: then doe not put him to it, spend not upon that precious stock of his free grace and love. Tis true, *hee is married to thee*, and therefore *though thou hast gone a whoring after many lovers*, Ier. 3. 1, 2, 14. still hee sayes, *Returne*, for *I am married to thee*: as therefore when man and wife are falne out, they consider, we must live together, and therefore they reconcile themselves againe: so consider, it must be between GOD and thee, and

make

ake it a means and mo-
ve to recover thee, as
muel did to the Israe-
tes. 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *You*
ve committed this great
ne, yet turne not aside from
llowing the Lord, for God
ll not cast you off, you are
s people. Goe home to
im againe, hee will speake
eace. Thinke thus, the
me will come wherein
God will be friends againe
with mee, hee and I cannot
ee strange long; though
would, hee will not, *Esay*
7. 18, 19. though he went
stubbornely, yet God
aled him, and would
t lose his childe, there-
re I will returne of my
life.

THE

THE FOLLY OF RELAPSING, after Peace spoken.

Psal. 85. vers. 8.

——*But let them turn no more to folly.*

THE Sixth Observation is, That *Peace being spoken* to their hearts by GOD, they *should returne no more* to *folly*. See this, *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *Thou having punisht us lesse then we deserve,*

and given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandements, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?

Reas. 1. 1. Reason: because it will be a greater aggravation in *sinning*; It is made the aggravation of *Salomons sinne*, 1 *Kings* 11. 9. *That God had appeared to him twice*: they were especiall appearances and manifestations of mercy; and though such doe now cease, yet we read of such as are analogicall to them, as *John* 14. 21. Christ promiseth to manifest himselfe, which is by shedding abroad his love, and his Fathers love into

nto the heart, which is vident by the former words, *he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him*; and after he saith, *we will come to him, and make our abode with him, vers.* 23. nd 27, *My peace I will give unto you.* Now such appearances will be set upon the score of every *sinne*, many yeeres after, as they were upon *Solomons*. And the reason is, because nothing wounds an ingenuous loving Nature more, than matter of unkindenesse: *If it had beene my enemy, sayes David, I could have borne it, Psal.* 55. 12. 14. *But it was thou oh man, mine acquaintance, we tooke sweet counsell together*, a bosome

friend to whom I had committed my secrets, opened my heart: Thus when GOD hath unbosomed himselfe as it were to a man, and told him what was in his heart towards him, this goes nigh him, if he lifts up the heele against him. And the reason of that further also is, 'because of all things else, a man cannot endure to have his love abused, you come nigh him when you do so, for his love is himselfe, and commands all in him, so that abuse his love, and you strike at his heart, it is lesse to abuse any excellency in a man, to reproach and extenuate his parts,

parts, learning, &c. though these are deare to him, but his love is his bowels. And therefore, when God hath opened his heart to man, and set his love upon him, and revealed it to him, and he carries himself unworthily, *it paines him at the heart.* Besides, it is against the law of Nature and of Nations to seeke out for a peace, and get it concluded, and then secretly to prepare for, and enter into a war; nothing more hatefull, or can exasperate two Nations one against another more than this. It was the aggravation of *Absalom's* sin, that being newly reconciled with his father,

and taken into favour againe, after two yeers discountenance, he then beganne to rebell more closely.

Reas. 2. 2 Reason is intimated in the word *folly*, as if the Lord should have said, Set aside the unkindenesse and wrong you doe to me, yet therein you befoole your selves; you will have the worst of it. And indeed, when God doth afterwards draw nigh to a man againe, upon that his recovery of his peace, it appeares to be folly, even in that mans owne apprehension; when he hath tasted how sweet God is, then come and aske him, What, will ye returne to

sin

sinne againe: he will then say, Aske mee if I will wound or cut my flesh: It is impossible, thinkes hee, I should any more be so besotted; if there were no more motives, hee thinkes it the greatest folly in the world. And therefore GOD on purpose chooseth out that expression, and placeth it here in this cause, because it is indeed the greatest folly in Gods sight; and so apprehended by our selves, looking upon *sinne* after peace is spoken to us. It is folly to *sin* against God at any time, but especially then; and that will appeare by these particulars.

1. Because, before a man had that peace, he felt the bitternesse of sinne, for GOD never speaks peace, till that be felt: now that is an argument even to sense, never to return to it again; which a fool will be warned by. *A burnt Childe dreads the fire*; even as a Childe will take heed being taught by sense. When a man shall be in great distresse, and his Conscience shall suggest to him, as *Ier.* 4. 18. *Thy wayes and thy doings have procured these things to thee, this is thy wickednesse.* a speech like that when you say to your Children, when they have gotten any harm or cold, or sick-

nesse,

esse, this is *your playing* nd gadding and going in he Snow, and your eat- g of fruit, &c. so doth G o d speak there to hem when they were in istresse, this *is your wic- kednesse, for it is bitter, it reacheth to the heart*, it oundeth the Consci- nce, the wounding of hich, of all else is the greatest misery. When nce a man after this, hath eace restored to him, and e comes newly out of uch a distresse, ask him en how he likes turning o such a *sin* again, and he ill tell you, it is the grea- st folly in the world: ke *David* if he will utther any more after

his bones have beene broken, and ſet againe.

2. Thou wilt eaſily acknowledge, it is folly to return to *ſin* again, if thou conſidereſt the termes, upon which thou didſt obtaine thy peace. Reckon what paines it coſt thee, to waſh out the guilt and ſtaine which ſinne had made, what vowes and reſolutions thou madeſt, what bonds thou didſt ſeale unto, what promiſes never to returne, what prayers and tears, what raps and knockes at Heaven Gates, ere thou couldeſt get an anſwer, or God to ſpeake one word, hee making as if hee had not beene within: why is it

is not folly now to lose that in an instant, thou hast beene a getting so long, haply many yeares, and with so much paines and cost? You use it as an excuse to prodigalls to say, things lightly come by, are lightly gone; and yet you count them, and call them fooles for it, as not knowing what it is to earne a penny: how much more folly is it, when a man having afore morgaged his peace, and God restored it againe after much suite, and waiting many a time, then to come home, and venture to cast all away at one throw at dice? Such a foole art thou, when thou returnest to sinne, to drinke

drink that at one draught, which thou haſt been getting many a yeer, what madneſſe is it? when thou haſt taken much pains to waſh thy ſelf, then to wallow in the mire again, and make thy ſelf new work, what folly is it? who but Children and fools will doe thus? That which the Church ſaid in another caſe, may well be alluded to in this, *Cant.* 5. 31. *I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

3. Conſider, what it is thou doſt hazzard to loſe by returning to folly: *thy peace*, *David* loſt it, as appears, *Pſal.* 51. 12. therefore ſayes he, *reſtore to me*

the

joy of thy salvation; In losing of which thou wilt be so much a losser, that if the sinne thou chooseſt, were able to give thee all the world, it could not recompence thee; no not the losse of one hours communion with GOD, which in a moment will bring thee in more sweetnesse, than all thy sins can do to eternity. If all the pleasures of sin were concocted, and the quintessence of them strained into one cup, they would not afford so much, as one drop of true peace with God doth, being let fall into the heart. *It is peace which passeth understanding.* Few pleasures here do exceed

exceed the senses, nay, the senses are capable of more then the things can give: but this passeth understanding. *Gods loving kindnesse is better then life.* If it were propounded to thee, thou must lose thy life next moment, if thou shouldest commit such a sinne, wouldst thou venture, if thou didst believe it? Now *the loving kindnesse of God is better then life*, and wilt thou lose the enjoying of it, though but for a moment?

4. It is folly to returne againe, because the pleasures of sin will be much lesse to thee after thou hast had peace spoken. Take them at the best, when

when they are freſheſt, and when thy palate was moſt in reliſh, and taſte with them, when thou wert carnall, and ere thou knewest what ſweetneſſe was in God, and they then were but poore ſorry pleaſures: but now, they will prove farre more empty then before; they are empty vaine pleaſures even to him that hath them in their flower, and in his ſeaſon of ſinning; and therefore all wicked men are weary, and do inwardly complaine of their condition, onely they cannot finde ſweetneſſe in God, and ſo are faine to keepe themſelves to their huſks, but alas, to thee they are

farre

farre leſſe worth than to another man, who knows not God, and therefore thou art like to have a worſe bargain of it; another man can make more money of a ſinne, and get more pleaſure out of it, than thou art able to do.

For firſt, thy conſcience having been ſcorched with ſinne, as ſcalt fleſh dears more, and is more ſenſible in coming to the fire, than other parts of the body, is become of a quicker ſenſe; whereas wicked mens is ſeared, and ſo they commit all *uncleanneſſe with greedineſſe*; but thine is tender and galled in the act, which allayes

layes much of the plea-
re of thy ſinne, and min-
eth the more bitterneſſe
ith it.

And 2. beſides this gal-
ng of Conſcience, which
common to thee with
any an unregenerate
an, thou haſt a principle
grace, an inner man,
hich is dead to ſuch
eaſures, that taſtes them
ot, that is like *Barzillai*,
ho through age, 2 *Sam.*
9.35. could not taſte ei-
er what he ate or drank,
young men doe; no
ore can that *New man* in
ee: and therefore it can
but halfe as pleaſant to
e as to another man. If
e ſide of a man be taken
l with a numbe Palſie,

what

what pleasure is it to
man, to exercise his
in the actions of life:
is but half a man,
lives but halfe a life,
is with thee, when
hast grace in thy
but half
take pleasure in
that new man the
half, reluctates,
for it, hates what thou
and all this must
strike off much of the
sure.

But 3. If wee
this, that this new man
him having once
what sweetnesse is in
and *How good the Lord*
is then like a man
hath eaten sweet-meat
other things are

with him, and there-
alſo it is folly to re-
e. *No man* (ſayes
iſt, *Luke* 5. *ult.*) *having*
old wine, deſireth
for he ſaith the old is
; a man uſed to high
, cannot agree ſo well
h thinne diet: ſo the
le having beene uſed to
of great pleaſures in
d, the impreſſion and
embrance of them
es his ſoule leſſe ſatis-
than another mans; a
macke that hath beene
rged to full diet, looks
it, and riſeth more
gry from a ſlender
le: now communion
h God inlarges the fa-
ties, and widews them,
d makes them more ca-
pable

pable of greater joyes than ote men have, and there- fore the creature is lesse a- ble to fill them; still he members with much gri- whilest he is eating husks, what fare he had his Fathers house: and o- *Then it was better with than now.* Call me not *Na- mi*, but call me *Mara*, she said, *For I went out and am come home empty*, doth he say, when comes from the act of ning, he went with heart full of peace, meeting with a bargain sinning, thought to ch his joy, and make it fu but he comes h empty.

Use, is to those who
re had Peace spoken to
en, let them at such
es feare themselves
GOD most, for then
es in this, as you see
e, as the most seasona-
admonition that can
given, to returne no
re to folly. 1. Feare
d then most; for of all
es else, then sinnes pro-
e him most: to come
d call him *Father*, and
guide of your youth, and
to fall to sinne, this is
doe as evill as you can,
cannot doe worse.
3,4,5. So *Ezra* 9. *After*
an escaping, should we
ine breake thy Comman-
ents, wouldest thou not
angry till thou hadst con-
sumed

sumed us? In times of af-
fliction it is the property
of a good childe to love
GOD most: in times of
speaking peace, to *fear*
God most and his *goodness*,
and to feare to offend him
for his goodnesse sake.
Did I onely say, that God
is *provoked* most then, if
you return to folly? Nay,
I adde further, he *is grie-*
ved, which is more than
to be provoked; and there-
fore you shall marke that
expression and admonition
on not to *grieve Gods Spi-*
rit, then comes in, when
the *Spirit hath sealed us*
up to the day of redemption,
Ephes. 4. 30. Then by sin-
ning we are said more
properly to grieve him
than

before; when hee
so farre ingaged him-
selfe to love a man, and
pressed himselfe to him,
sets his Seal upon him
his. God is angry with
cked mens sinnes, but he
grieved for yours To
ove him is more than
anger him. Meere an-
is an affection can ease
selfe by revenge, and
comming even againe
th the party, and when
e can or intend to doe
, our mindes are not
much aggrieved, but
ease themselves rather
thinke of the revenge
hich we mean to ex-
cute: so when wicked
en sinne whom GOD
eanes to meet with, he
is

is said to be angry rather than grieved; and saies *I will ease my selfe of mine adversaries: Esay* 1. 24. *avenge my selfe of mine enemies.* But here, as when a mans wife that lyes in his bosome, or his childe that wrong him: so is it when one sins, whom God hath set himself to love, and done much for, and made knowne his everlasting kindenesse unto, and led to the day of redemption: this goes to the heart, grieves him rather than angers him, and these are the truest and deepest griefs. What should I do with you in this case? if afflict you, and by these meanes goe about to

turn

ne you from your ini-
ity, therein he shall but
ict himselfe as it were
Though they rebelled,
when they were afflicted
was afflicted. Esay. 63. 9,
As when a Father that
a Magistrate, or as one
r maintaines a Student
a Colledge, if either
isheth a childe, or pu-
ll in his purse, hee puni-
eth himself, so must
d afflict himselfe to af-
t you. Put not the
rd into these straits if
have any love in you.
d 2. as thou art there-
re to fear God most
en, so thy self most,
d to bee more watchfull
er thy own heart; thou
t then apt to returne to

folly, if thou takeſt not heed; as when a man hath been very hot, or ſweat much, hee is apt to take the greateſt cold. *Hezekiah*, after GOD ſealed peace to him, and anſwered his prayers, and renewed the leaſe of his life, his heart got cold, hee did returne to folly. The reaſon is, becauſe then the heart is apt to grow leſſe wateh full, and to thinke it ſelf fortified enough again any tentation. As S. *Pa* having ſeene Chriſt tra figured in the Mou grew confident in his o ſtrength. And know t the Devill watcheth fi an opportunity moſt, f hee gets a great victory

e can foile thee then, af-
t hee hath beene foiled
mselfe, and when thou
t most triumphing over
im; how many battels
ave beene lost through
ecurity of victory and
ecoyling of the enemy?
nd besides, our corrupt
ature, so farre as unre-
ewed, is apt to gather
art to it self, to slight
n, as thinking its pardon
ily gotten.

Therefore when thou
t tempted, labour often
renew those thoughts,
hich thou hadst of thy
ne at that time, when
ou wert suing for peace,
fore thy peace was got-
n; when thou wouldest
ve given a world for

Gods favour; & alſo wh
thoughts thou hadſt of
when God ſpake pe
how thou didſt abhorr
yea, thy ſelfe, & look wi
ſin was moſt bitter to
and an enemy to thy pe
as if uncleanneſs, idlen
neglect of prayer, ill co
pany, &c. and preſerve
thy heart thoſe bitter
prehenſions of it, and ſa
it, thou haſt *bin a blood*
to me, as *Moſes* wife ſai
her husband: and thou
have got peace, and my
ſaved, yet it was a blo
ſin to *Chriſt*, his blood
ſhed to purchaſe this
peace, & ſhall I return to

And when tempted
again, have recourſe to
kindneſs God ſhewed

pardoning, and say, how
shall I doe this, and sinne a-
gainst God? say as he said,
this thy kindnesse to thy
kind? 2 *Sam.* 16. 16. and
that, shall I *Absolom*-like,
now I am new reconciled
to my Father, fall a plot-
ting treason against? what
shall I make more worke
for prayer, more worke for
God, breake my bones a-
gain, and lie roaring again?
thinke thus, I was burnt in
the hand afore, I shalbe rac-
ked surely now. *Sin no more*
lest a worse thing befall thee.

Vse 3. The doctrine of
assurance (if not abused)
and of Gods speaking
peace to men is no dange-
rous doctrine to make men
secure and presumptuous

in sinning: when peace is preached in any mans heart, this use naturally flowes from that Doctrine, *returne no more to folly*. The very scope of the whole Epistle of S. *Iohn* is to help all beleevers to assurance, as appears by the 1 *Iohn*. 1. 4, 5. and the 5. *Chap*. 13. *These things I write to you, that yee might have communion with God, and that your joy might be full*. But this will open a way to all licentiousnesse. No sayes S. *Iohn* Chap. 2. 1. *These things I write unto you that you sin not*; nothing guards the heart more against tentations, than the peace of God: it is said to *guard* the heart, *Phil*. 4. 2. Yea and

d if you doe sinne, the as-rance of Gods love is e speedieſt way to re-over you; ſo it followes: *any one doth ſinne, wee ve an Advocate with the ther, &c. And hee that h this hope in him,* that to live with Chriſt, and owes *what manner of love e Father beares us, puri-es himſelf as hee is pure,* 1 *John* 3. 1, 2, 3. If there ere no more but ſelfe-ove in a man, it were hen no wounder if he doth buſe it. For ſelfe-love, here the love of God is anting, is unthankfull nd ungratefull, willing o take all the love and indneſſe which is afford-d, and abuſe it, and worke

upon it for its owne advantage; and it is true also that becauſe wee have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therefore God truſteth ſo few with much aſſurance, becauſe they would abuſe it. But where true love to God is ſeated, and much of it implanted, there the love of God and the peace of God doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame and ſet it a worke, even as arguments ſuitable to ſelfe-love doe worke upon, and ſtirre that principle. For grace is more for GOD than for our ſelves, it being the image of Gods holineſſe, whoſe holineſſe conſiſts in this,

to

aime at himself in all: and therefore when Gods free grace towards a man is revealed, it raiseth him up to higher straines of love to God, and hatred of sinne. And therefore it is observable, *Psa.* 51. 12. that *David* when hee *prayes for the restoring of the joy of his salvation*, hee *prayes* not simply for it, or alone, but withall *prayes* for a *free spirit*, *Establish me with thy free Spirit*: that is, a spirit of ingenuity, which is kindly, sweetly, and freely wrought upon: therefore when wee have a free spirit wrought in us, then that free love that is in GOD towards us, will worke most kindly upon

it, and constraines us to *love him that loved us first. The love of Christ constrains us*, 2 Cor 5. 14. *Because wee thus judg, that if Christ dyed for all, then they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that dyed for them*: S. *Paul* gives the reason, why this love of Christ did thus constraine him, because hee *did thus judge*, that is, this consideration of Christs love, hee having a principle of love in his heart to Christ, hee found to bee a powerfull prevailing reason to perswade him to live to Christ. Having a new judgement hee saw force and strength in the argument. And so shall

we

wee if we thus judge, and
will have this naturall
consequence as naturally
to follow upon it in our
hearts, as any reason in
any other kinde hath, that
is brought to enforce any
other conclusion. And
therefore as the minde is
constrained (as it were) to
assent to a truth proved
by force of reason, that if
you grant this, then this
or that will follow: so
because we judge this rea-
sonable by an argument
drawne out of *loves To-
picks, that if Christ dyed
for all, who otherwise must
themselves have dyed, that
then they should live to him,*
this will *constraine* us to
love him, and live to him.

Amor

Amore Dei est extaticus, nec se sinit esse sui Iuris.

The cause of relapsing into the same sinne after peace spoken, resolved.

THis Text and admonition here gives a just occasion to consider a little of that so often questioned case of Conscience concerning relapses of Gods children into the same *sinnes* and folly againe, and whether after peace spoken, Gods people may returne againe to folly. Some have held, that a man after a second repentance could not fall into the same *sinne* againe; others if he did, it excluded him from mercy for time to come. For the comfort

comfort of some poore soules, whose case and condition this may bee, I will speake somewhat though sparingly and with caution.

1. The Scripture no where excludeth those from the state of grace, or denies mercy from those that have relapsed into the same *sinne*, especially so long as in regard of the manner of their *sinning*, it bee but folly, not wickedness or wilfull *sinning*; that is, rather proceeding out of errour of understanding, and heat, and impetuousnesse of foolish affections, then obstinacy and malice in the will, and with *despite of the Spi-*

rit

rit of grace, *Heb.* 10. 27.

Yea: 2. In Scripture wee meet with such passages and promises, as may undoubtedly uphold any soule, that hath so fallen after peace received, into the same *sinne*, and preserve him from apprehending himself excluded therefore from mercy and the state of grace: As *Hos.* 14. 4. *I will heale their backslidings, I will love them freely*; unlesse they had fallen after repenting and former healing, it could not have beene called backsliding, and yet this hee promises to heale, and with all shews the ground that moved him to it, his loving them freely:

cely: for if in any thing
s free love is shewne to
y of his children, and
awne out, it is in hea-
ng againe such a back-
ding soule after recove-
y and peace given. For
e falling into the same
me, which hath beene re-
ented of and healed, pro-
okes GOD more than a-
housand other acts of
nnes formerly commit-
ed, though of the same
ind. And therein also to
hew his free love, that hee
an pardon even the abuse
f love it self, hee leaves
ome thus to *sinne* after
is love shed abroad in
heir hearts. Some hee
hewes his free love unto,
n keeping them from
sinning,

sinning, others in pardoning them, and giving them repentance: they are but severall wayes of drawing it forth; so that if in any thing, herein his free love is shewne, for if it were not free, it would never endure it selfe to bee abused. And likewise the sure mercies of *David* are then shewne, when God *multiplies to Pardon*: so *Esay*. 55. 3. having mentioned the promise of the *sure mercies of David*, Hee promises to *multiply to pardon*, as it is in the Orginall, *verse* 7. which are thus joyned, both because the sureness of his Covenant, is therein shewne, and because wee might haply multiply

ly to *sinne*; and at least it
ppoſeth the poſſibility
it againe. God likewiſe
ns upon ſuch a ſuppoſi-
on in that expreſſion of
s, to his owne people,
rem. 3. 1, 2. They *ſay, if a*
an put away his wife, and
e becomes another mans,
all not the Land be greatly
lluted? but thou haſt played
e harlot with many lo-
rs, yet returne againe to
e, ſaith the Lord. Hee
eakes to her, as to one
d beene his Wife, who
ough ſhee had not beene
t away by him, but had
t away her ſelfe and
nne away, not once, but
ten, and that with ma-
y lovers, and ſometimes
the midſt of her whore-
domes,

domes, had come in and made challenge of his former love, and pleaded his former mercy to her, and yet fallen backe againe *verse* 4.5. (where he addes, *Wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father, and thou art the guide of my youth*, that is, I know sayes God, you will come now and cry as heretofore you have done and say, Oh thou art my Father and my Husband, and confidently still claime an interest in mee upon my former kindnesse, and *yet doe as evill as you can*, for you cannot doe worse then thus to abuse my love) yet for all this at the 12. *verse*, *Returne thou backsliding Israel*, saith the Lord,

Lord, *for I am married to* [illegible], *ver.* 14. That which [illegible]ee doth thus to a nati[illegible]n, hee may doe to a par[illegible]icular man who is his [illegible]hilde.

Againe, 3. There are [illegible]ot altogether examples [illegible]anting for this.

1. Wee finde *Sampson* [illegible] godly man (whom yet [illegible]ee would scarce have [illegible]hought such but that wee [illegible]inde his name in the list of [illegible]hose Worthies. *Heb.* 11.) [illegible]nsnared with a *Philistine* woman, against the coun[illegible]ell of his parents, *Iudg.* 14. [illegible]. who clearly laid open [illegible]is *sinne* to him, and hee was in the event repro[illegible]ed for his foily, for his wife deceived him, told his

Example. 1.

his riddle to his enemies which hee in the end perceived, and further to reprove him, in the issue shee was given away to another, *verse* 16, 17, 20. from all which passages of reproofe, an holy man that had his eyes in his head, could not but see his errour; and yet againe a long while after this, (twenty yeares after, *Iudg.* 15. 20. (when certainely ere that hee had repented of this his *sinne*, for which his parents before, and after, God so clearely did rebuke him,) hee went to Gaza, *Iudg.* 16. *verse* 1. *and saw a harlot, and went in to her*, and there escaped narrowly with his life at midnight.

ight. And *verse* 4. After hat alſo it came to paſſe hee fell in love with ano-ther, as bad as any of the former. *Dalilah*, who was his ruine. But his retur-ning thus to folly coſt him deare; for in the end he was taken as a Captive to the *Philiſtims* his ene-mies, and that through her falſe-hood; deprived of his ſtrength hee had ſpent upon theſe women; had his eyes, thoſe betraying lights put out, that had enſnared him; and him-ſelf made a foole of, to make his enemies ſport. So as no child of God can take any great encourage-ment thus to returne to folly, for the future, by his

his example, though comfort they may have therefrom in case they have returned for the time past.

Example. 2. Another example may bee that of *Iehoshaphat* who committed a great *sinne*, in joyning with *Ahab* that wicked King that *sold himself to worke wickednesse*, 2 *Chron.* 18, 1. 2, 3, and he was foretold what would bee the successe of what confederacy and journey, by *Michaiah*, before hee went with him to battell, and after in the battell it self, where hee hardly escaped with his life, and by an extraordinary providence at his *prayer* was delivered, *verse* 31,

31, 32. and as if that were not sufficient, God sends another Prophet to him, *Chap.* 19. 2. who with open mouth reproves him and discovers to him his *sinne, Shouldest thou helpe the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord:* which message to so good a man doubtlesse was not in vaine, but humbled him for that his sinne, and wrought repentance in him to avert that wrath. And yet after that great and miraculous deliverance of him and his people, *Chap.* 20. we finde him relapsing into the same sin, *ver.* 35. *After this did Iehoshaphat joyne himself*

self with Ahaziah King of Israel, who did very wickedly, and he joyned himself with him to make ships to goe to Tarshish: which another Prophet in like manner reproveth, and likewise God himself rebuked by the like ill successe of that league to the former, *the ships were broken, verse* 37.

3. Saint *Peter* a man, who seemed by other of his carriages, bold enough, was yet three severall times surprized with base feare: once when hee tempted Christ not to hazard himself at *Ierusalem*, where Christ had told him that hee was to suffer: *Matth.* 16. 21, 22, 23, *Master*

(sayes he) *spare thy*
; upon which speech
rist calls him *Satan*, re-
keth him more sharply,
an at any other time,
which surely there
s a more than ordinary
ise. Saint *Peter* thought
t if his Master should
fer at Jerusalem, that
mself, and the rest
ould not be safe: That
eech therefore proce-
d from fear, and there-
e Christ doth imme-
tely thereupon call for
f-deniall, and taking
the Crosse, *verse* 24.
nd this was immedi-
ly after peace spoken,
se 16, 17, 18. Christ
d never more comfor-
bly given testimony to

Saint *Peter*, and his *faith*, than there. Yet again, after this, Christ had him up into the Mount, and transfigured himself, to hearten him against that triall to come, which made him so confident; yet then he denied him, at his arraignment: when again Christ immediatly upon that lookt back upon him with so sweet a look, as broke his heart for this his folly; and so he returned again, and it cost him many a tear; and Christ after the Resurrection, owned him again, more than any of the rest, bade them that first met him, *Go tell Peter*, He mentions him by name, and

and in speciall, *go tell* him the first news of it: and then also he asked him, *Peter, lovest thou me?* and he said, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee*: as if he had said, Though I have played the wretch, yet *I love thee*: upon this, though he grew more bold, *Acts* 4. 13. yet *Gal.* 2. 11, 12. we finde him falling into the grudgings of the same disease, which cast him into another fit, he *dissembled, fearing them of the Circumcision*: this was a spice of the former sin, though not so grosse; and though the outward acts in these sins were divers in their occasions, yet they were all acts and

buds of the same root of bitternesse; and may as well be called sins of the same kinde, as the committing differing acts of uncleanneſſe, are reckoned falling into the same sin.

In the fourth place, if the Scriptures had been utterly silent in examples, yet reason consonant to other principles & grounds of Divinity, and of the Scriptures, might perswade the same.

Reas. 1. 1. If he may after the most serious, and through repentance fall again, into as grievous a sin of another kinde, and return: why not into the same again? I confesse there is

is some disparity, which might make him more averse, and set him in some more remoteness, from the same *sinne* he hath particularly repented of, then another; which shall be considered in its place. Yet, the difference, cannot be supposed such, as should make the one possible, and not the other: all true repentance working the heart, to an abominating every *sinne*, as well as any; and therefore if it were true, it was for that particular *sinne*, as *sin*; and then it would work the like against all, and every *sinne*, according to the measure of the *sinfulnesse*; and though it may,

and doth work a more keen, and speciall hatred against that particular *sin*, a man hath been most stung with, yet still, this is but so far, as this aggravation, (*to fall into the same sin again*,) may cause such a relapse, to be more sinfull than another *sin*: and so far, that upon that ground he is, and may be more set and strengthened against it, then against another *sin*. But then, if the supposition fall upon another grosse *sin*, never before committed, the sole and single act of which, other circumstances make as haynous, even as this reiterated act of a *sin* formerly

merly committed, can be, then the one is equally as possible as the other. But however, yet still the difference is but in degrees: namely, in that the heart is elongated a degree, or so, further from that sin formerly committed, than any other: which will not therefore so vary the case, (as *magis & minus* do not) that it should be made impossible to fall into the one, and not into the other.

2. *Reason*: if he may fall into some grosse sin, which at first conversion, he did above all other humble himself for: and yet, *that* same *initiall repentance*, did not put him

Reas. 2.

into such an impossibility of falling into that sin again: Why then should a renewed act of repentance of the same, or for some other reiterated sin, be supposed to have such vertue in it; as to make him shot-free for ever, from the same fiery dart again?

Again thirdly: Let it be considered, from whence it should be, that a renewed, or indeed any act of true repentance, though never so great, and intense, should have such a transcendent, eternall, and invincible vertue in it, and priviledge annexed to it; for how is it, that repentance doth strengthen

ten us against sinne, but by restoring the decayd frame of Grace, to a better constitution and greater degree of strength than before; and by raising it, above a mans lusts, and above that lust, more than all other? as in *David*, when he prayed, *Create in me a clean heart*, which, through his *sinne* of uncleanneſſe, was in an especiall manner, defiled with a proneneſſe to that sinne: But yet with all remember, that, *that* new frame of heart, and strength gotten by that renewed repentance, and *that* augmentation, and increase of hatred against, and abominating that

ſin wrought by it, is all but a creature; as grace, and every new degree of grace is: and therefore for preſerving us, hath in it ſelf but the power, and force of a created habit, which may be prevailed againſt, by the ſin that is in us; and can no more, nay much leſſe put us into a ſtate of confirmation againſt any particular ſin, than the grace of the Angels could of it ſelf confirm them in a ſtate againſt all ſin. And as for the impreſſion of that bitterneſſe, which in our repentance for that ſin fallen into, was made upon our hearts; that alſo can be ſuppoſed to have but the

like force upon our spirits, *that* the impression of *joy unspeakable and glorious*, hath upon the heart in those heauenly raptures, which beleeuers sometimes enjoy; yea and the latter of these will easily be supposed to be of the greater efficacy of the two; and both but creatures: Now those rauishing joyes, are not yet such immortall and euerlastingly quickning cordials, that put such spirits into a man, as to preserve him from swounds, and faintings of spirit for euer: and though, whilst they abide and are present to the heart, they do then raise it above all things

things here below: yet when a man hath been a while off from that Mount, and hath conversed a while with things here again below; then that lustre wears away, as the glory that shined in *Moses* face did: and after a while, the sense and present taste of those joyes wears out; and when that is gone, the bare remembrance of them which is left, hath not in their absence, such an infallible, though a great efficacy to preserve his minde in an everlasting disrelishing former delights; but that he may, and often doth fall in love again too too much with them: although

although indeed whileſt the preſent ſenſe of them did abide upon the heart, it abſtracted the minde from all things here below. And hence a man is apt to *fall from his firſt love*, *Rev.* 2. and from that high eſteem of ſpirituall things; as the *Galathians* *Gal.* 4. 15. *Where is the bleſſednesse you ſpake of*, ſayes Saint *Paul* to them? therefore anſwerably the remembrance of the bitterneſſe of any *ſinne* felt in our deepeſt humiliations, is much leſſe able to preſerve a man, nor is the impreſſion and dint made ſo laſting, nor the ſcarres and wounds of conſcience continuing for ever ſo

so, fresh as everlastingly to preserve and deter us from falling into the same *sin* again. For both are but creatures, and at best but arguments drawne from sense, and experience within our selves, and have but an humane created power, which is not alwayes efficacious; especially seeing GOD hath ordained us *to live by faith, more than by sense*, for faith is appointed by GOD to be our more constant keeper, 1 *Pet.* 1 5. *we are kept through faith unto salvation*, and by it more surely and more constantly than by impressions of joy, or sorrow, which are made to sense: and yet we

we are not kept by it of it self, but by *the power* of GOD, so then, we are *kept by the power of God* as the principall supporter, and guardian, *through faith*, as the instrumentall, and by it rather than by sense or any other grace of sorrow or repentance; because faith carries the heart out of it self, and commits it self wholly into the hands of God *as a faithfull Creator* (who is the strength of Israel, to *keep* a man *from every evill work*,) as not being able to secure it self against any sin through the power of any mortification, or strength that any other grace or degree of grace

grace hath built, no not for one moment; and therefore is as dependant upon God after a fall, and a renewed repentance out of it, yea and more than before he fell, and his own woefull experience hath reason to make him so. The like instance to illustrate the truth of this we may draw from the assurance of faith it self. For even the assurance of faith it self, (which is an act properly belonging to that grace, called therefore *the assurance of faith*, *Heb.* 10. 20.) which doth strengthen us as much against doubting when it is joyned with joy unspeakable and glorious, as repen-

pentance can do againſt
ny other *ſinne* : and
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he ſtrength of it a belee-
er is apt to think him-
elf armed and ſtrengthe-
ed, and ſo eſtabliſht, as
hat he ſhall never que-
ion Gods love any
more, or the pardon of
his *ſinnes* : and yet, expe-
ience ſhews it, that the
guilt of ſinne prevails
ometimes again, after
his, and the ſame doubts
riſe, and prevail as much
s ever; neither will the
remembrance of the for-
mer aſſurance be alwayes
of force enough to reſiſt
them; for he may come
to queſtion that aſſurance
it ſelf alſo; and ſo *for-*
get

get that he was purged from his old sins. And if the guilt of sin prevail in the Conscience again, against such a renewed and setled act of *faith*, why may not the power of a lust prevail in the members, after a renewed act of repentance?

Reas. 4. 4. If it be said, that a renewed act of thorow repentance doth keep a man, not by any peculiar vertue in it self alone, but by the power of God concurrent with it: Then I demand to see the promise wherein God hath infallibly obliged and ingaged his power, upon such a renewed act of repentance, to preserve from falling

lling into that ſin of
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t which no man in faith
n affirm it; and with-
t which there is an *it*
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ſuch a poſſibility, as
metime it falleth out, and
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all be out of danger of
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ed to preſerve a man;
et, but in the ſame manner
at other ordinances are,
s Prayer, and the word
preacht,

preacht, and admonition, &c. with which GOD doth not alwayes so infallibly cooperate, as efficaciously to work alwayes that which they serve to.

5. If there were not such a possibility, as might and doth sometimes fall out; then every regenerate man, after such a renewed act of repentance, might secure himself against the committing that grosse act again for ever; but so he can never do against any particular act of sinne, but that sinne against the holy Ghost. Saint *Paul* therefore exhorts, when a brother is fallen into a sin,

to restore such an one with the spirit of meekness; upon this consideration, *considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted*; and he layes the exhortation upon those who are most *spirituall*; *ye that are spirituall, restore such an one, considering thy self lest thou also be tempted*, *Gal.* 6. 1. so as he speaks of such, as have their hearts raised up to the best frame, through the most deep, and serious repentance: and now we will suppose one, that hath formerly fallen himself into the same sin, which another is fallen into, but not yet restored, but himself is returned by

by repentance out of it: (for indeed, such a spiritual man, is of all other like to be the meekest bone-setter of a man fallen) and even such doth Saint *Paul* exhort to consider, that themselves may for the time to come, be also or in like manner tempted, that is, fall as this man fell; and therefore *so be tempted* as to fall into the same sin again, that he was fallen into. And if any man could be secure from the like fall again, he had been out of the reach of this exhortation to this duty upon that ground mentioned, as not capable of it. But the holy Ghost hath elsewhere, 1 *Cor.* 10.

13.

13. told us, that there is *no tentation which is common to man*, but is incident to befall any man, at any time; and therefore *verse* 12. *exhorts him that standeth, to take heed lest he fall*: indeed, that temptation which *is common to Devils with men*, the sin of finall despair, and against the holy Ghost, &c. a regenerate man may through the grace of Christ, secure himself against: but, all such *sins as are common to man*, from these or any of them, no man in any state, can without an extraordinary revelation, secure himself from the commission of.

Only I adde these Cautions

Cautions concerning this case.

1 Caution. 1. There are *two* sorts of corruptions. First, most grosse corruptions, which Saint *Peter* calls, τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου: the *defilements of the world*, 2 Pet. 2.20. they being the common mire, or kennell, wherein the uncleane swine of this world wallow, and which the Apostle calls such *works of the flesh as are manifest*, Gal. 5. 19, even to the light of Nature; such as are adultery, fornication, drunkennesse, &c. and by those two expressions do they distinguish them from a sort of more spirituall and refined lusts. For secondly,

ly, there are corruptions more spirituall, as pride, secret love of the world. Now, for those grosse corruptions, which are contrary, even to common honesty, and (to use his phrase) *are punisht by the Iudges, Iob* 31. 11. which profane men wallow in, a godly man hath more strength against them, so as it is not so ordinary for him to bee entangled againe and againe with these; for where but morall principles are, these are abstained from, as wee see in the Pharisee, *I am no adulterer, &c.* therefore, where grace is, much more. And some *sinnes* are more opposite to the spi-

rit of *holinesse*, and lesse compatible with grace, as uncleanneſſe, of which Saint *Paul* sayes, *God hath not called us to uncleanneſſe*, but to holineſſe. 1 *Thess.* 4. 7. it is in an especiall manner there opposed to *holinesse*, and such as these are *workes of the flesh* which are *manifest*, even to Nature, to civill men: and therefore when they are often fallen into, they doe manifest, that the heart is but flesh. And although the limites, how seldome or how often, cannot bee set concerning relapses into these, or any sinnes; yet, in an ordinary course it may bee said, that few *godly* men fall into such sinnes

sinnes againe and again: God keepes them from such in an ordinary providence, that scandals should not arise: they being sinnes which all the world takes notice of. But those other sinnes of rash anger, and love of the world, and spirituall pride, &c. these being lesse manifest, and sitting more close to our spirits, godly men are more subject unto.

Yet secondly: we must againe distinguish:

1. There are the inward lustings to those outward acts: now, though grace weakneth the very lustings within, yet, takes them not wholly away:

The spirit that is in us, (That is,) in us Saints, saies S. *James*, *lusteth to envy*: and as to envy, so to all other *sinnes*.

And secondly, there are the outward grosse acts of such *sinnes*; and therein the weaknesse of *sin* in a regenerate man, and strength of grace shewes it selfe most in preserving from them: for, as *to will is present with me*, saies S. *Paul to will what is good, yet how to performe it I am not able*, *Rom.* 7. 18. So on the contrary, to lust the heart may bee ready, and lust may soone rise up in rebellion, but when it should come to the act, there is a weakenesse dis-

covered

covered; they come to the birth, and want ſtrength often to bring forth: the contrary luſting and prevailing of grace being then ſeene and diſcovering it ſelfe: that it fareth with a regenerate man in this cauſe often, as with a man that is deadly wounded; who riſeth up to ſtrike his enemy, and thinkes to runne him thorow, but ſinkes down againe, *medio curatu*, when his ſword is at his enemies breaſts, through a deficiency of ſpirits; or as a man in a Palſie, or the Gout, who thinks hee is able to walke, till he comes to try, and then he finds a weakeneſſe which makes him

fall backe againe: Thus even when the whole forces of lusts are mustred up, yet the weapons fall out of their hands. Humours in a healthfull constitution, may stirre, and boake in the stomacke, when yet they come not up, nor prevaile unto vomiting. In that place aforenamed, *Gal.* 5. the Apostle seemes not to deny but that in the most regenerate, lustings may arise, for *the flesh* (sayes he) *lusteth against the spirit, ver.* 17. but yet, as for outward acts, he tels them, *verse* 16. *That if they walke in the spirit,* that is, in the prevalency of the spirit, keeping up a holy frame of heart

heart above the flesh, that then *yee shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*: for that frame of heart so kept up will hinder the outward fulfilling of the lust: which is never done till flesh and corruption is actually raised above the spirit, and gets more voices to carry it, till the spirit bee under hatches, and the flesh above, and so steeres the helme: otherwise the lusting of the spirit against the flesh, will hinder the outward doing, and fulfilling of a lust. For the reason hee gives, *verse* 17. *So as you cannot doe what you would*, implies, that not onely lustings, which arise without consent, may bee

in such a man, but further, much of the will may bee wonne to consent to them, to like them; when yet there is not strength enough to carry it on to the outward act; *you cannot doe what you would.* And what those works of the flesh are, which are manifest works of the flesh, and which Christians whilest they walke in the Spirit fulfill not, he mentions and reckons up in the following words. And this is the more ordinary frame of a Christians heart; for *ver.* 24. (saies hee) *they that are Christs have crucified the affections and lusts,* that is, so farre, as not to fulfill them.

3. He

3 He may more easily fall into a grosse *sinne* of another kinde, than into the same after speciall repentance for it, and peace spoken in the pardon of it. Because true repentance especially fortifies the heart against that *sinne* which a man hath most repented him of; and sincerity lies more in watching over that *sinne* than any other: so sayes *David*, *Psal.* 18. *I was upright, and kept my self from mine iniquity*; that especiall *sinne* which was eminently his *sinne*. A mans arme that hath beene broke, will, if will set, rather breake in some other place than where it was broke at the

first. Hence sometimes it falls out, that that which was a godly mans bosome sinne before conversion, continues not to bee so after, but, another steps up in the roome of it, by reason that hee then endeavoureth to wash out that great staine, most; and spendeth the most of the Fullers sope, to purge himself from it; and so becomes, ever after, most watchfull over it; and sets in this his weakest place, the strongest garrison, and a watch, to prevent the enemy. And as an act of some presumptuous *sinne*, though it inclines the heart more to all *sinne*, then before, yet, especially

ly, to commit that kinde of *sinne* again, rather then any other: so on the contrary, it is in a sound and solemne repentance, for some especiall sinne; and in the endeavouring, to mortifie some especiall member of the body of *sinne*: (to mortifie which, not onely in the bulke and generall, but also particularly and apart in the severall members of it, the *Holy Ghost* exhorts, *Colos.* 3. 5.) though thereby, the whole habit of the body of *sinne* is purged and weakened, yet that particular *sinne* which we aime especially to have mortified, is through Gods blessing more subdued then any

any other. We see Idolatry, was the *sinne* which the people of Israel relapsed into, again and againe; yet when they were once throughly humbled by the Captivity for it, they never returned to it, of all *sinnes* else, not to this day: so as it may bee said, as was fore told, haply in another case, *Ezek.* 16. 43. *Thou shalt not commit this lewdnesse of all thy abominations*: *Ionah*, though he would haply never ronne away from God againe, after his Goale delivery out of the *Whales* belly; yet, immediately after peace spoken to his heart he falls into a sinne of another

ther kinde; into a passion of extream anger and peevishnesse, and quarrelling against God. And the reason of this especiall tenderneſſe to fall into the same sinne, is, because the Conscience lookes upon a relapse into that sinne, to bee more hainous, than into any other sinne of another kinde; because of that aggravation of it, which thereby would staine and die it: and although a sinne of another kinde shewes the variety of corruption more; yet, this is more against the power and worke of repentance it self, which was particulary exercised about that sinne: and

also

also breaks, and dissolveth all bands of a mans vowes, covenants, prayers, &c. made against it in particular, and so is made more grievous. And this wee may see in *Ezras* humbling himself for that great sinne of the people in joyning themselves in marriage with the people of the Land, when hee did set himself to humble himselfe for them, together with those *that feared God*, *Chap.* 9. 4. What an hideous apprehension of the hainousnesse of that sinne, if they should againe fall into it, did that dayes repentance raise his heart up unto? as appears, *v.* 14. *Should we againe breake thy*

com-

commandements, and joyn in affinity with them, wouldest thou not destroy us, till thou hadst consumed us, and till there was no escaping? Into which sinne, yet, the people did againe fall, after they had repented of it, with a solemne confession and promise of amendment, which is recorded *Chap.* 10. *v.* 11. 12. &c. yet they returned to it againe the second time, as wee finde in *Malachy*, who lived the last of the Prophets, and after this prayer of *Ezra*. For *Chap.* 2. 12. the Prophet sayes, *An abomination is committed in Ierusalem, for Iudah hath married the daughter of a strange god*: and then followes

lowes the aggravation, v. 13. *This ye have done again*, that is, the second time, and in that respect are challenged to deale treacherously; and that also in respect they had repented of it the first time, *covering the Altar with teares, with weeping, and crying out*, as *Malachy* there speaks: so as *God regardeth not your offerings any more*. And therefore also *Psa.* 78. 40. *How of did they* (saith hee, as aggravating their sins) by murmuring *provoke the Lord?* and *Numb.* 14. 22. God reckons up, and mentions the times of their sinning, how often they had thus sinned, as an aggravation

of

of them, *They have tempted me these ten times.*

4. He may fall into the same sinne againe and againe, untill hee hath recovered himself, and his peace fully, by a thorow repentance, but yet seldome after. *Lot* committed incest two nights together; but the orifice of his lust, was not yet stopped by repentance: the wound was not closed, and so bled againe afresh; but when it is healed once, and the heart made perfect with God, and divorced from that sinne, and entred into Communion with God againe, then though it may fall out, yet a man more hardly

4. *Cast.*

hardly returnes. A woman that is gone from her husband may play the whore a long while with him shee ran away withall till her husband fetches her againe: but to runne often away, after receiving againe is intolerable. That is not so ordinary in Gods child.

5. *Caut.* 5. Though wee can hardly set limits to say when, or when not, this shall fall out from the degrees of mens repentings: as that if they have such or such a degree of repentance, that they fall no more: yet we may further consider a difference of their returnings to God, and repentings; and of Gods

Gods ſpeaking peace.

1. Of their *Repentings*: ſome are more imperfect and but as it were thawings of the minde a little, by meanes of a little Sunshine of Gods love: ſome are more thorow and deepe; that recover a man, and put him into a ſound and healthfull eſtate. As for example, a man in an ague hath well dayes, yet his fits returne, and it may bee they leave him for a month or ſo; and yet they take him againe, as at Spring and Autume; which is becauſe all this while his body is not thorowly recovered to a ſtate of health: ſo is it with a mans heart in reſpect of his

his lusts, though hee may have many well dayes, wherein hee may eate his meate, and receive sweetnesse in the word, and ordinances: yet at times his distempers and aguish fits returne, hee being aguish still; but in the end, after the peace of God hath more thorowly established his heart, hee attaines to some setled constant victory over it; and when it doth not prevaile to victory, such aguish fits end usually in consumptions, in which long agues often end: as in Temporaries, in whom, sinne overcomming GODS striving with them, it eates all good beginnings out:

out; but if they belong to GOD, then usually that aguish distemper is in the end, by a more thorough repentance, so healed, as that they attaine to more victory, and security against it than any other sinne: that as in those other kinde of tentations, it often falls out, that, that which a man doubteth of most, hee comes in the end to bee most assured of, and to doubt no more; so also here, a man becomes most freed from that sinne, hee was long exercised with, of all other. So also

3. For Gods dealings with his, there is much difference therein to bee found:

found: there are some kinds of speaking peace by God, and meltings of the heart of his people, which yet are not of that force as to overcome, but wherein God doth but (as it were) strive with them; which strivings doe ever and anon worke their hearts to a repentance, and that true, and serious: which yet is not so deepe, and thorow, nor so healing the heart at the bottome, as it should. For God sometimes useth more imperfect kinde of strivings, even with his owne children, about some particuler sinne they are to leave, which doe not so fully, at first prevaile, and

over-

vercome in them, which God doth, to let them see the running issue of their natures, how grace would run out at it, (as the Apostle speakes) and overcome grace in them, if hee should let it alone: and so, lets out upon his child after many yeers some lust, which had beene long downe, which puts him to it exceedingly, so that hee is in hazzard to bee undone, and is put into fears of it: and yet God visiteth his spirit by fits, and *per intervalla* at times strives with him; and though hee falls, yet hee puts under his hand, and gives him well dayes, and some comfortable visitations; Heb. 2. 1.

tions; yet such as are not deepe enough to worke him fully off from it. For, as God strives with wickedmen, so hee sometimes strives with his owne also; which may seeme to bee the true meaning of that speech, *Gen.* 6. where having mentioned the sinne of his own children, *vers.* 2. That the Sonnes of God tooke to them wives of that wicked seed of *Cain*, he sayes, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that* [*he also*] *is but flesh*: Hee meanes not this, of all mankinde, for hee sayes, [*hee also*] is but flesh: now, with what other creatures, doth hee joyne them in this comparison,

pariſon, but with others of the ſonnes of men: ſo as the meaning is, I ſee my Children, that they alſo are corrupt, and degenerate as well as the reſt of mankinde, and my Spirit hath ſtriven with them. In which ſtriving, GOD lets them ſee, how if hee did not in the end, ſhew forth his free love to the full, in the reſcuing of them, and healing their backſliding, they would bee undone: ſo as, in the end, through his grace which is ſufficient, they obtaine the greateſt conqueſt over that luſt of any other; when the heart is once thorowly awakened, and ſetled in a tho-

row peace. And as, those doubts they were most troubled with once, (which though they had at times some light against, yet by fits did still arise) are yet in the end, so overcome, as they arise no more, but they enjoy the greatest freedome from them: So it is often herein. And these *strivings to not overcomming*, I resemble to the thawings of the Ice, in a great frost, as when in the day time, the Sunne shines, and in the Sunshine it thaweth a little: but yet, so as at night, or in the shade it freezeth, when sometimes, the weather also begins to change for a night, and yet falls a freezing

freezing againe: so here, there is not such a thorow shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, as should make a thorow generall thaw, to the purpose as we say; and so, when the heat of that is withdrawn, it freezeth againe: but in the end there comes a more thorow and generall thaw, and charge that carries all away, melts the heart, and so alters the temper and constitution of the weather, (as I may so speak) as it freezeth no more. And such a thawing of his heart had *David*, when *Nathan* came to him, and not afore; though it may be he had those lesser

relentings often before.

But let those that are in such a case, take *heed they bee not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne*: and of all the times that passe over you in your lives, these are the most climacteriall, and critical, and most dangerous: For God *will not alwayes strive*, but if thou beest his childe, if such thawings will not doe it, he will use some great afflictions, in the end to divorce the heart, and thy *sinne*; his love will one way or other overcome thee, and in the end prevaile. As when *Israel went on stubbornely in the way of his heart*, (saies God) *I have seene his wayes and will heale him*

him and guide him, Esay 57. and the Lord may so heale thee, as those lusts of all other shall not in that grosse manner, break forth any more. And in those times, when God dealeth thus with him, a man will after say, that in such passages of his life, he had more free love spent on him, then in all his life time, before or after: and when he is freed and healed, he will be more thankfull, and fearfull then ever before, or then otherwise he would have been; and so get ground by his stumblings. If any of you, being now in such a conflict as this, in such a vicissitude and chance of war:

If yet thou findeſt a conſtant fight againſt thy ſinne, and that thoſe breakings, and meltings of thy heart by God, do win ground of it; and that the comforts, and hope, which at times are vouchſafed, do ſtrengthen, *and ſtabliſh thy heart in well doing*: as 2 *Theſſ.* 2. *ult.* and makes thee more fearefull, every time thou riſeſt, then ever; ſo as to looke upon another fit if it ſhould come, (which knowing the deceitfulneſſe of the heart, thou feareſt,) as the fit of ſome great ſickneſſe, leſt it ſhould return again; eſteeming it as the greateſt croſſe that can befall thee; which thou

thou wouldest buy off with thy bloud; and bleedest most of all to think that thou hast so unconstant a heart, which as it hath abused Gods love formerly, so thou feareſt, will do so again; if thus thou go on to fight it out, the love of God will in the end overcome in thee: but if thou findeſt that thoſe encouragements from God, do through thy corruption, (which turnes Gods grace into wantonneſſe) nouriſh thy luſts, and make thee leſſe feareſull againſt the next time; and thy heart harder, and ſecurer, and to ſlight *ſinne* more, becauſe thou haſt been ſo oft viſited from

on high, and pardoned thy ease is dangerous, and may prove desperate.

6. Though he may returne, yet not presently: *Luke 5. last.* *He that hath tasted old wine, doth not straightway drinke, and desire new*: not whilest the love of God, and the taste, and relish of it is fresh in his mouth: when the impression is worne out indeed, and begins to be forgotten, then haply he may returne.

Vse. To conclude with the use of this point: If it be folly to runne into the same *sinne*, though we repent of it afterwards: then, what folly is it in them that utterly fall away:

way; and after they *have beene enlightened, and tasted of the good Word of God*, then fall againe to the pleasures of *sinne* and never repent of them? as many doe, that come, and try a little, what is in Religion, and the wayes of God, and then returne againe to their vomits, and never returne to piety againe. *Foolish soules who hath bewitched you? are yee so foolish, that having begun in the spirit, yee end in the flesh?* as *Galat.* 3. 3. *Folly* indeed: to spend the harvest of your time in seeking God, and then to leave him, when you are about to take leave of the pleasures of *sinne*. Alas

poore

poore soules, whither will yee goe? do you ever thinke to have such a GOD again? *Thou hast the words of eternall life*, said the Disciples to Christ: and as *Saul* said to his servants, to keep them from falling away unto *David*; *Can the sonne of Iesse give you vineyards, and make you Captaines of thousands?* 1 *Sam.* 22. 7. So, can the world give you that peace that I can give you, may Christ say to you; yea and heaven besides hereafter? Is the devill, with all the wages of *sinne* you post after, able to make you amends? You thereby dishonour God in returning to *sinne*,

and

and bring an evill report upon the good land; and discredit your Master in changing your service; but withall you befoole your selves most: you *return to folly.* For even that which you think to gaine the worlds good word and opinion by, even that you lose: for, though they make a spoil of you, and triumph in such, *and glory in their flesh a while:* yet they never inwardly think well of such an one; nor truely love him. A backslider, is like luke-warme water, having beene once heated, which good men spue out, and evill men regard not; for what [illegible] can indeed be

[illegible]

made of it? *Like salt that hath lost* its *savour it is good for nothing but the dunghill.* Like one that hath beene married, but lives divorced; shee is undone for her marriage ever after. Such is the condition of those that fall away and repent not: You who have but turned unto Folly, and are not growne to a despising and despiting Gods wayes, *Returne oh Shulamite return.* And you that have peace and communion with God, take heede you doe not lose him, you will never have such a God againe.

FINIS.

. La palabra de Christo [illegible]
mente en toda ſabiduria, enſeñando os, y ex-
os los vnos à los otros con Pſalmos y Hym-
ciones eſpirituales con gracia cantando en vue-
cones al Señor. Y todo lo que hizierdes, en
obra, todo ſea en el Nombre del Señor Ie-
gracias al Dios y Padre por el.

 El

Marcy Linnell
Hor Bo

La Dominica de la Septuagesima.

La Collecta.

SVplicamos te Señor, oygas benignamen
de tu pueblo, afin que nosotros que justar
castigados por nuestras culpas seamos por

THE RETURNE OF PRAYERS.

A Treatise
WHEREIN THIS
Case [*How to discern Gods Answers to our Prayers*]
is briefly resolved:

WITH
Other Observations upon Psal. 85. 8. concerning GOD'S *speaking* PEACE, &c.

By THO. GOODVVIN, B. D.

HAB. 2. 1.
I will watch to see what he will say to me.

London, Printed by *I. Raworth*, for *R. Dawlman*, and are to be sold by *Luke Fawne*, at the signe of the Parrot in *Pauls* Church yard. 1641.

January 9th 2 day 1768

Joseph Paul
Huckelhib
Book

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO
THE MUCH
HONOURED
KNIGHT,
Sir
NATHANAEL RICH.

SIR,

GOd, who from all eternity hath had an infinite Maſs of grace and glory lying by him, to beſtow upon his Church: and did accordinly provide a treaſury and Magazin ſuffi-

cient wherein to ſtore up all, [the Boſome of his ſon] *in whom are* hid, riches *ſo* unſearchable, *as cannot be told over, much leſſe ſpent to all eternity.*

Ephes. 3.8.

πλουσίως. Tit 3. 6. *He hath as richly ſhed his holy Spirit on us: that* we, who *could never have* known *of any thing bequeathed us, nor* what to pray for as we ought, *might both fully from him* know all that God hath given us, *and through him lay claime thereto,* who maketh interceſſion for us; *and ſo doth furniſh us with a privy key to all that Treaſury, which otherwiſe, is faſt ſhut up to all the world.*

Through which Spirit of Prayer, *and* Supplications

ons *thus* poured forth, *beleevers come to be at once* anointed to the fellowship, *and execution of those three glorious Offices of* Christ *their Head. Not only* [1] *of* Priests; *by* offering up *their prayers*, as spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ: *but* [2] *of* Kings; to rule with God. *Hos.* 11, 12. *Being hereby made of Privy Councell to the King of Kings, so as* their Counsels, *and desires expresst in* their petitions, *are said to* be fulfilled; *and* their decrees *in their* Prayers made, *ratified, and* established. *Nay further, by vertue of this priviledge, advanced to such height of fa-*

Ps. 20. 4, 5.

Iob 22. 27, 28.

vour, as by their strength *in prayer alone*, to have power with God *himself, and not onely with him, but also* over him; *and* in their wrestlings to prevail, *Yea to command: Himself hath said it*; Thus saith the Lord, the holy One of Israel and his Maker, ASK of me, of things to come, concerning my sonnes, and concerning the work of my hands, COMMAND YE ME, *Isai.* 45. 11. *which so transcendent priviledge of power, is likewise by the expresse words of this great Charter, universally extended unto al transactions of this lower part of his dominions; whether Ecclesiasticall, which*

do

do concerne his ſonnes, *that is, his Church: or what ever other, the more ordinary* works of his hands, *that appertain to common providence.*

And for as much as theſe grand affairs of this his Kingdome, *as future, and* to come, *are commended to their prayers, as their moſt proper ſubjects, about which they are to treat,* Ask of me of things to come: Matth. 6.10. *In this reſpect, they do become as truely* Prophets *alſo; though not in ſo full and compleat, yet in ſome kinde of true reſemblance; not by* foretelling, *yet by* foreſpeaking *in their prayers, thing that come to paſſe. To demonſtrate which, God,*

who made and upholds this world, and all things in it, by the word of his power, doth likewiſe rule and govern it, by the Preſidents, and preſcript rules, of the word of his will: exactly
Pſal. 25. 10 *diſpenſing unto men, both rewards and puniſhments, according to the tenour of ſome or other of his promiſes and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded: though with ſuch various liberty, in reſpect of the particulars, that* his wayes *remain* unſearchable and paſt finding out: *That look how he appointed in the heavens, thoſe ordinances of the Sunne, Moon, and Starres, by their light, heate, and motion,* to rule the

the day and night, *to* divide *and cause the severall* seasons *of the year, and all the changes and alterations that do passe over this* animall *and* naturall *world. In like manner hath he stretched out that so* exceeding broad expāse *of his word and law, (to which the Psalmist doth assimilate it) over this* rational *world, of Angels and Men; and therein set his* Statutes, *and his* Judgements, *that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and punishments, they might order and direct these his creatures reasonable, and all their actions; also dispose, and set out all the issues of them. And seeing his* Saints they

Ps. 19. 8. 96.

Ps. 19. 1. 2. 3. 4. compared with Rom. 10. 18.

they are a people in whose hearts is his Law; *and their* delight *is to* meditate therein both day & night, *they dayly calculating and* observing *the various aspects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of those innumerable precepts, promises and threatnings, which themselves and others, Nations or men, stand under: and by a* Judgement *thence resulting, so farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their supplications and petitions* according to Gods will: *Hence their prayers oft, full happily succeed, and aforehand do accord, to those issues and events, that afterwards fall out. That like as it sometimes*

Ier. 8. 7.

times falls out, that the earth comes to be just under the Sunne and Moone, in some of their conjunctions; so their desires and prayers, sometimes in a direct line, fall under, and subordinately concurre with Gods secret purposes, and some revealed promise met in conjunction, to produce such and such effects. The Spirit *also, herein* helping their infirmities, *sometimes so guiding and directing them, by a gracious preinstinct, though unbeknown to them, to pitch their requests upon such particulars, as God hath fully purposed to bring to passe; becoming thereby, as it were, the Spirit of prophecy unto them; respectively, in some*

ſome meaſure and degree.

Thus doth that great King employ his neereſt ſervants, as his under-Officers, and Sheriffs to ſerve his Writs, and executions upon his enimies; to execute the Judgement written *in his threatnings*, Pſal. 149. 9. *and to accompliſh his mercies written alſo, by putting all the promiſes in ſuit, to be as man-midwives (as* Hezekiahs *alluſion, when he ſent a viſiting to the Prophet* Eſay, *for his voyce and ſuffrage, ſeemeth to import) to help and aſſiſt his promiſes and* decrees *in their travel with mercies and deliverance, when theſe* their children do come unto the birth, and there is no ſtrength

Eſay 37. 2, 3. 4. Zeph. 2. 2.

ſtrength to bring them forth.

In all which, they ſhall therefore have the honour to be accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greateſt works of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and laſt Edition, both of all Gods works, and likewiſe ours, then compleat and finiſhed, ſhall be publiſhed to all the world, they ſhall finde their names put to them, together with his own; and the ſame by him acknowledged, to be as truely the works of their hearts and prayers, as that they are the ſole work of his hands and power. Such honour have all his Saints.

And if all the works of God